PHILOSOPHY OF THE SELF

OR

A system of Idealism based upon *Advait Vedanta*

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PREFACE

THIS book consists of thirteen chapters. They comprise twelve lectures which I delivered at the Indian Institute of Philosophy at different dates between July 1938 and March 1939. I had originally no idea of writing a book for the press. But as time went on and the argument developed, I began to feel some interest in publishing the lectures in a book-form.

It has been my fortune to have had some direct acquaintance both with the Indian and the European modes of thinking. I greatly value the rationalism and the consequent freedom of thought which inspire western philosophy. But I am acutely conscious of the barren-ness of mere rationalism. Indian thought is more practical. It is pursued with a religious bias and a religious earnestness. Perception of the truth is more important than rational explanation. This may or may not be the right way to get at philosophic truth. But I have adopted this particular point of view in the following pages. I am personally convinced of its soundness.

My general stand-point is that of the *Advaitic* system of thought. But I have not tried merely to propound that system. I have tried to get at the truth in an independent way. The method of

exposition which I have adopted is that of European philosophy; but the ideas are essentially Indian. This is particularly so in chapters IX to XII, where the Vedantic mode of thinking will be quite evident. The last chapter brings out the essential difference between the *Vedantic* Absolute and some concepts of the Absolute current in western philosophy.

I do not claim that I have said anything new in the following pages. I have merely repeated an ancient truth in my own way. This truth is evident to me. I find all the reasoning pointing to it. Indeed, if the reasoning here given is taken piece-meal, it may not stand thorough-going criticism. But it is most likely that no other reasoning can, when it is taken in this fashion. I am persuaded to think that reasoning is not the whole thing in philosophy. It merely provides us with a means of exposition and of communication of an incommunicable truth. If it is so taken, I am confident that the following pages will reveal, through the various side-lights, the truth that India holds dear and that is the source of the inspiration of its best minds. A little credulity, which I like to call a spirit of faith and of humility, has sometimes a greater truth-value than carping criticism.

Amalner,
12th April 1939.

G. R. M.

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INTRODUCTION

THE title of this book would seem to indicate that the subject of it is a restricted one. This is not really the case. It is our opinion that there can be no philosophy of anything, unless it is the philosophy of everything. There can be no compartments in this sphere of thought; and any division in the subject-matter of philosophy, except for the convenience of exposition, would be quite artificial. The subject matter of philosophy is ultimate reality or the ultimate ground of all the appearances of reality. Any consideration of things short of this can only be an incomplete and fragmentary piece of thinking. It cannot give us *the* truth.

The expression "philosophy of the self" is used by us not with a view to discuss merely certain problems connected with the self. That is a subsidiary matter. The expression is used by us in a more significant sense. It is used to bring out the most important character of ultimate reality. Ultimate reality must have the character of the Self.

The notion of ultimate reality is forced upon us by a philosophical consideration of the facts of common experience. Our analysis of knowledge reveals that what we actually know is not the real as it is in itself. This sets us the problem of a self-revealing and ultimate reality. We shall find that this reality is indicated by certain characters. We can do no more than enumerate some of them here without discussing them. (1) Ultimate reality must not be capable of being known as object. It must be self-known or self-revealing or one with the intuition of it. In this sense, it must be fundamentally intelligent, and not externally related to intelligence as are all objects of knowledge. (2) It must be immutable. All mutation is of objects only. (3) It must be infinite or without limitation of any kind. This means that it can have no dimension, great or small. It must be truly simple, without parts and indivisible. (4) It must be the repository of all value, and therefore itself the highest value.

The above list does not exhaust all the characters which we might find in ultimate reality. They represent some of the ways in which we seek to comprehend it. Ultimate reality in itself has no character whatsoever. A character implies objectivity, and ultimate reality is no kind of object. We may therefore enumerate all its so-called characters,

but that cannot enable us to know it as it is. The only thing that can so enable us is its character or want of character that is implied in the assertion of its identity with the Self. Ultimate reality is ultimately nothing but the Self. Philosophy of the Self is in this sense the only pure philosophy. To know the Self is the end of all philosophical thinking.

We shall not anticipate here all our later discussions about the nature of the Self. But it will not be out of place to answer two main objections which may be urged against our view. Our notion of the Self is that of pure, attributeless being. It may now be said that such being cannot be the ultimate ground of reality. Whenever we think of any kind of being, we think of it as endowed with certain attributes. We can form no idea of any other kind of being. Pure being is pure nothing. To set up this being as the ultimate reality or as the very ground of the known and the visible universe is to set up an abstraction in the place of the real and the concrete. Reality cannot be mere negation. It must have a positive character.

This objection, it appears to us, involves a confusion between two kinds of negation. The one is a thorough-going and genuine negation representing ultimate being. It is not any kind of appearance to us or an object. It does not require to be further

grounded. It is a question whether it should be called negation. But this negation, if we so choose to call it, has nothing in common with the other negation which is only realised in our thinking. The latter is an appearance of some kind to us and needs to be further grounded in reality. It is positive like a presentation and is in that sense not a real negation.

We are confronted in our ordinary experience with certain objects. They appear to be positively real. In that case, there is no need to go beyond them to an ultimate reality which is their ground. But if we have any reason for thinking that they are not real in themselves, they would be just like illusory appearances that cannot do without a ground of reality. A question that would arise here is, how is the ground distinct from the appearances? The only answer that can be vouchsafed is, "Whatever else the ground may be, it must itself be no kind of appearance. It must have no attributes and no characters which can only belong to an object that appears. The ground must be an attributeless ground. Anything short of this, would itself require to be grounded." It is evident that ultimate reality in this sense has to be conceived as a *perfect negation* of every thing that can be known or thought. The ground cannot be another appear-

ance. It must be the negation of every appearance. It must be unlike everything that we can know. How can any conception be adequate to it? For, after all, our conception can only follow the known and the visible. The ultimate negation of the known and the visible cannot be another conception. It cannot be a matter for thought. It can only be a matter for a higher form of intuition which transcends thought.

As against this, there is a negation which is natural to thought. It is the negation which has a necessary reference to some object or other. We speak of the negation of A or the negation of B, etc. We cannot speak of negation pure and simple. Negation pure and simple is not thinkable. It is inevitable for thought to raise the question, "Negation of *what?*" If we have no experience of any objects, we can have no experience of any negation. We cannot significantly use the term "not." But once we know objects, negation is implied in that very knowledge. If something is a chair, it is by that very fact "not a table," "not a pencil," "not a flower" etc. The negation of anything is almost without limit. We can even say that the thing is carved out of limitless negation. There is no limit to what a thing is "not," while there is a limit to what it "is" or "can be"; and without this im-

plicit reference to the "not," the thing itself cannot stand up as an object. While then we accept the reality of the object, we cannot deny the co-ordinate reality of the negation of that object. The thing affirmed and its negation stand on the same level. We cannot accept the one and reject the other, or *vice-versa*. If the thing is an appearance, its negation is no less an appearance. The negation is as much our object as the thing itself.

The negation of a thing may be of various kinds. It may have reference to space, or to time, or to quality, or to all these taken together. A thing which exists in *this* place is negated in every other place at the same time. Similarly, a thing which exists *now* may not exist at other times. It did not exist before it came into being, and it cannot exist after it is destroyed. If it has certain qualities, it does not have certain others. If it is a fig, it is not a mango. We can also combine all these and say that a thing is in no place and at no time, and does not have any quality. It will then be either an unreal thing or an illusory thing. What is important for us to note is that we are quite familiar with this kind of negation. It is what we ordinarily understand by negation. This negation is clearly our object. We can be directly aware of it. We can detect it sensibly, as when we say, "the book is

not on the table." If the things which we know are only an appearance and not reality, can the negation of things which also we know be anything else? It is evidently part of that entire appearance which constitutes the world to us. We cannot accept one part and reject the other, or give more reality to one and less reality to the other. Negation is a phenomenon to us. We have in the state of deep sleep as complete a negation as we can think of; and yet we shall find later on that it is some kind of object that needs to be revealed and needs to be grounded. Such negation cannot be ultimate negation; it has a positive character like any object. It is another object.

The negation which is negation *par excellence*, which is the ground of *all* the appearances whatsoever both positive and negative, and which we are in search of as the ultimate ground, must not only negate the things but it must also negate the negation of those things. This ultimate negation cannot have an objective character. It cannot therefore be conceived. It can only be intuited. And when it is intuited, it will not offer any further problem. In order to have any problem about it, we must be able to think it. When we think of the negation of things, we have still a picture before our mind. But when we think of a negation which is the negation

of this very negation, we can form no picture in thought. We can legitimately doubt whether there is any such thing. When however we have direct intuition, we cannot further doubt or further question. That would be the end of all our problems about it.

Ultimate reality, which is the ground of all things, is to be seen. Any conceptualisation of it is fraught with error. But can it be seen? Our answer is that it can only be seen under one condition. That condition is that it is in the relation of identity with the Self. Any conception of ultimate reality that deviates from this will not only make of it an object of some kind and so part of the appearance of things to us, but it will also render impossible any direct intuition of it. The Self alone satisfies all the conditions. It is essentially non-object. It is not part of any appearance. At the same time, it represents the only form of direct intuition of non-objective being. If there is any reality anywhere which is not an object and which is directly intuited, it is the Self. It thus gives substance and reality to the conception of an ultimate ground of things.

We shall consider one more objection here. Ultimate reality may be what we have supposed it is. But can it *explain* the appearance of things? If reality is what we say it is, if it is absolutely opposed

to the nature of things and constitutes their ultimate negation, how does it account for those things? Why should the things appear at all? What makes them possible? Our reason seems to demand that the appearances must somehow be traced to and deduced from the reality. Otherwise, we have not explained anything.

A thing is said to be accounted for when we have given the cause of it. In this sense, the ultimate explanation of anything would be the ultimate cause of it. There might be an ultimate cause or the first cause of all things. But the notion of causality, as generally understood, is not very satisfactory. Whatever the nature of the first cause, it cannot render intelligible the passage from the cause to the effect. In so far as the effect is a certain novelty and did not exist prior to its effectuation, it is not really accounted for; it is more or less inexplicable. The connection between the cause and the effect is not one of reason; it is a mystery. We do not really gain anything by tracing the effects to an ultimate cause. But although we may not gain anything by way of rational explanation, we may gain in another way. We may have a better comprehension of the ontological status of things. For the cause has necessarily a reality that is superior to the reality of the effects. If there is no cause, there can be no

effects; but if the cause is there, it is not necessary that there should be effects. A real cause is a free cause. The ultimate cause of things cannot but be a free cause. It must be both simple and spiritual, when contrasted with the effects. Thus we gain a better apprehension of the true nature of things. The effects must ultimately return to the cause or be reabsorbed in the cause; and in grasping the cause, we have grasped the things. But the claims of reason are not fully satisfied. The demand for explanation remains.

The cause however may be conceived differently and more in accordance with reason. We may suppose that there is an identity between the cause and the effect. The effect is not distinct from the cause. It is just the cause. What is distinctive about it is a name and a form; and both these are extraneous to reality. A name evidently makes no difference to reality. And so far as the form is concerned, it has no reality of its own; its reality is the reality of the substance whose form it is. This view of causality will be generally recognised in what is called material causality. Gold is said to be the cause of all golden ornaments; and a person who knows the nature of gold may be said to have known all the ornaments of gold. For these ornaments differ from one another only in shape and in

name. In reality, they are nothing but pure gold. The name and the form have no substantial being; gold alone has. Gold then is the cause of all ornaments of gold; and the relation between this cause and its effects is one of identity.

This view of the causal relation is fully adequate to reason. It can satisfy the demands of explanation. If we can show the ultimate cause of all things in this particular sense, we shall not have left anything unexplained. We now maintain that the intelligent Self is the cause of all things that appear. It is the true substance. The effects are differentiated from it and from one another, not in substance or in real being, but only in name and in form. In fact, there is nothing in this whole visible or objective world except the unsubstantial name and form. The reality is the Self. Those who know the Self, know everything that there exists.

Is this sufficient explanation? Can we not press for further explanation? Can we not ask,—if the Self alone is real, why the appearance of a world of names and forms? In the case of gold there is no delusion. We recognise gold in all ornaments of gold. Here the delusion is quite evident. We do not recognise the Self in the objects which are essentially of the nature of the not-self. The

analogy breaks down. The demand for further explanation seems inevitable.

We admit the distinction, and so also the delusion. But we contend that there is a limit to the *why* of anything. Something which exists in itself and which is uncaused or self-caused has merely to be recognised as such. It cannot be further explained. Similarly, something which has no real being, which is real only as an idea or as an appearance, and which is illusory in character, can have no further explanation. The only *raison d'être* of an illusory appearance is that *you see it.* It has no reason for its being in reality itself. For reality simply and absolutely rejects it, or negates it. If you saw the reality, you would not see the appearances. If there is any ultimate cause for the illusory appearances, it can be no other than our ignorance of reality. For without this ignorance, we should not make the mistake. The only explanation of the appearances in question is subjective error. And subjective error cannot be further explained. It is essentially irrational. There is no reason why one should commit an error. We can give many psychological reasons how people come to make errors. But there is no logical reason. There is no reason why people *should* make errors, or why error is *inevitable.* When we have said that something is

due to errror, we have given the last explanation of it. The something is not that something. That it appears nevertheless is due to unreason. The illusory is essentially irrational. It should not be. The fact that we do take note of it, cannot be traced to reality, which should be the case with all legitimate explanation; it can only be traced to our ignorance of reality, which is the ultimate principle of irrationality.

The one substance in all reality is the Self. Whatever else appears beside it is illusory in character. It has no real being. It is best explained when it is traced to our ignorance of ultimate reality. There is no further scope for reason here. Nor is there any mystery of existence left unexplained. A mystery is still a problem in explanation. It demands to be unravelled and understood. But there is no more mystery when the mystery is traced to a fundamental misunderstanding. Things appear not because there is a reason for this appearance which we do not know, but because the appearance is due to error and unreason. There is no mystery anywhere for the person who sees reality and sees the appearances for what they are, *i. e.* as illusory. He has solved the mystery. The term *māyā* used in Vedantic literature should not therefore be understood to signify the mystery of creation, but as the final solution of that mystery. Similarly, the term

anirvāchaniya used to indicate the nature of the illusory has no implication in it of an unresolved problem or an ultimate question-mark. It has rather the implication that the illusory which is indescribable in terms either of the real or of the unreal, and which is quite inexplicable in terms of reason, is essentially irrational and offers no problem in explanation. Our rational activity is not frustrated. It is disarmed. Reality is found to be quite transparent everywhere. There is no problem left to be solved.

CHAPTER I

The Metaphysical Problem

IT is held by some thinkers that the attempt to construct a complete metaphysical system is bound to fail. No system is likely to explain all the facts or to be wholly satisfactory. What is wanted is not *a* philosophy, but the right method and the right spirit of getting at one. The actual conclusions therefore do not very much matter. What matters is the spirit of philosophising. This alone is truly valuable. The end of the philosophical undertaking is almost infinite. For truth itself is infinite. It may never be fully realised. What alone lies within our power is to take long views or to view things together as a whole. We must be satisfied with this effort itself for attaining the truth. We need not worry about reaching the goal. The value of philosophy lies in the disinterested spirit of reason with which we seek to render intelligible the entire field of our experience, and not in any set conclusions.

We do not agree with this view of philosophy. We believe that philosophic truth is attainable. This truth is unlike any other truth which we know through the ordinary sources of information. It is non-natural truth or super-sensible truth. It has also an interest for us which no other truth can possess. For it has a direct bearing upon our spiritual well-being and our ultimate destiny. The possibility of attaining this truth is the only incentive to philosophising.

Metaphysics may be said to be concerned with the study of the ultimate ground of reality of all things. This ground is not directly given to us in any sensible intuition. It is in that sense super-sensible. Knowledge of the super-sensible may or may not be possible. But if it is to be possible, we must at least define very clearly the scope of philosophy, and distinguish its subject-matter from the subject-matter of the empirical sciences which deal with the sensibly given world.

We note at the outset that there is no set of facts and no department of science which cannot properly be included within the scope of metaphysical study. Metaphysics is in a sense inclusive of all the sciences. The latter constitute the base, metaphysics the apex. Metaphysics has to start with certain facts, and the sciences offer these facts in a most systematised form.

The question naturally arises, has it not some special department of study as distinct from the sciences? Each particular science is devoted to the study of a particular set of facts. What does metaphysics study? It is evident that there is no particular set of facts which is exclusively the province of metaphysics. Metaphysics is not a special science like the other sciences.

It may be said that metaphysics is a general science. Its business is to review the results of all the special sciences and to give us a more or less unified view of things. It is a co-ordinating science. If this is so, metaphysics cannot be said to lead to any positive results of great importance either for the special sciences or for the general understanding of the nature of things. Each science has its own method of tackling facts of its study. Its aim is always a clearer understanding of things. In order to achieve this, it varies the method of approach. Even the abstract requirements of logic have to be accommodated to the nature of each special case. It is the facts that in a measure determine what logic we are to pursue. And it would not be wrong to say that each science has its own special logic which is adequate to the facts it handles. Metaphysics can give no guidance to these sciences; the latter can well do without any interference from it.

On the other hand, metaphysics must wait upon the sciences. It has no sphere of study independent of the sciences, no special method, and no "body of truths" peculiar to it. Philosophy, as a co-ordinating science, may no doubt give a certain intellectual or aesthetic satisfaction. But it is not an instrument of truth.

It may be argued that it is an instrument of truth in one particular sphere. It studies the general nature of reality. It answers those questions which relate to all facts alike, and not merely to any special branch of them. But what are those questions, and how does it seek to answer them? Are there any questions about things in general which may be answered without any empirical investigation such as the sciences undertake? One thing is certain. Philosophy is not a universal science in the sense that it studies all the facts taken together much as each science studies a particular department of these facts. If it answers any questions, these questions can have no reference to empirical truth. That is the province of the sciences. It can only answer questions which relate to truth that is non-empirical. And how does it seek to answer them? It does not answer them by an empirical study of facts. It must have a different method. That method is the spiritual method of

reflection. The data of philosophy are not objects apart from our experience of them. The data of philosophy are the subjective experiences which are inclusive of the objects; and the only way in which these can be made to yield their true meaning is the spiritual activity of reflection.

Philosophy may not be any kind of empirical study. But can it be wholly unrelated to the common facts of experience? Shall we not say that it seeks to understand them by going behind them and visualising their non-empirical or transcendental ground? The metaphysical effort would seem to be the effort to get behind the phenomena and grasp that which constitutes them phenomena. This may be so. But how are we to get behind phenomena? We know the given or the immediate. We do not know what underlies it or what lies behind it. We might speculate. But how are we to verify the truth of our speculation? We simply do not know any kind of transcendental reality or a thing-in-itself. Indeed, subjectively we can analyse out an *a priori* element in our knowledge of things as Kant did. But the difficulty would be to interpret this *apriori* element in terms of metaphysical or noumenal being.

It may be said that we are not required to go *from* things *to* their transcendental ground. We have no means of doing this. We start with the

ground. We start with the super-sensible reality of God and of the soul. We do not exactly know these entities as they are. If we knew them directly, there would be no problem for philosophy left. We have concepts. The business of philosophy is to start with these concepts and give us rational knowledge based on them.

But is reason competent to give us this knowledge? It is argued that it is. It finds ready-made certain concepts which are not derived from experience. They are in this sense *a priori* concepts. Starting with these, it seeks to analyse them. In this way, it is able to answer all metaphysical questions. The method of philosophy is analytic, and its material is all *a priori*. We are familiar with the ontological argument about God. We have the notion of the most perfect being. The notion of perfection implies existence; for perfection without existence would not be perfect. Thus the very notion of the most perfect being implies that such a being exists. God therefore necessarily exists.

This argument has been criticised. We know Kant's criticism of it. The notion of the most perfect being has no counterpart in experience. It is a mere notion. Existence cannot be the implication of any notion. If the ontological argument were

valid, it would also be valid that the notion of a £100/- note in my pocket would imply that there really was such a note in my pocket.

The reply of the ontologists would take some such form: The notion of a £100/- note in my pocket is certainly constructed by me. I am quite conscious of this. I therefore have no problem about it. I do not search my pocket for the note. I know the notion to be a notion and nothing more. The notion of the most perfect being is not constructed by me. Certainly I am not conscious of doing this. It is on this account that the existence of the most perfect being is at least a problem for me. I may doubt; but I cannot disprove this existence. I have no similar problem with regard to the existence of the £100/- note.

Some sort of indirect proof of the existence of God is also attempted. It is asked, whence the concept of the most perfect being, if I am not the author of it? The source must be as great as the concept itself. It can be no lesser being than the perfect being himself. It is he that is the source, and that could have imparted the concept to me. The very fact of the concept is thus a proof of the existence of God. The form of the ontological argument may be defective, in so far as we seek to derive existence from the notion. But we need to realise

that the notion already implies existence. The further derivation of existence from the notion is only formal. It is intelligible because of the special significance of the notion in question.

How shall we meet this argument? We shall say that there is no such *a priori* notion. The mind of the child and the mind of the savage is not endowed with it. We, civilised and grown-up people, have the notion. But then its origin can easily be traced. It is no other than the scripture. We have got the notion from there. What we are doing is to substitute theological interpretation for philosophical knowledge.

This is, however, in our opinion, no answer. For the question will arise, how has the scripture come to incorporate the notion? Is not the scripture on that account revealed? Is not the ultimate source of this revelation God himself? If not, the concept cannot come to be formulated. It is essentially a non-empirical concept. No man can properly be the author of it.

This argument appears to be quite valid as far as it goes. The inspired character of all scriptures is based upon it. But it is not fully convincing. It needs some modification. In order to supply this, we must consider another extreme view, the view of

logical positivists. It may be argued that scriptural knowledge is verbal only. We have the so-called notion of the most perfect being. But it may be shown, by an analysis of this notion, that there is nothing corresponding to it in our experience. The notion is thus meaningless. The words in the compound are used merely to tickle the feelings of the pious. They have no knowledge-value or meaning-value. As a general rule, concepts which are not derived from experience are useless and meaningless concepts; and if philosophy has to do with these only, it is equally a useless and meaningless business. If philosophy has any legitimate sphere, it is to explode empty concepts and to give us a wholly rational analysis of all concepts that are legitimate and significant.

It may here be argued that the notion of the most perfect being cannot be shown to be meaningless. In fact, to deny that there is any corresponding meaning of the notion is to admit the meaningfulness of it. Otherwise, what is it that we deny? Unless we are conscious of the meaning, we cannot say that there is no corresponding meaning. The notion of the most perfect being is certainly not a spurious notion like that of a "square circle." All that we can say is that although we have the notion, we have no direct experience of the sort of

entity signified by it. Our knowledge is conceptual only. But that does not prevent us from bringing out the implications of the concept, or pressing for fuller knowledge.

Against this it will be contended that we have here only an illusion of meaning. All legitimate meaning is based upon experience. The meaning of a proposition is the experience that would validate it. If we have no experience of the most perfect being, if we have no validating experience, the concept is really meaningless. We have no use for it.

It appears to us that in this controversy both sides have partial truth. We have the concept of the most perfect being or of God. This concept is not meaningless to us. We certainly mean some kind of being, although that being is not actual to us and we cannot be said to know it. Still, it is a possible object of experience. It stands for an ideal kind of being.

An ideal is something which is yet to be realised. And an ideal being is a being that is capable of being realised in experience although it may not be actually so realised. But unless it is so realised, its actuality is a problem to us. We believe, but we do not *really* believe. Real belief can only follow actual experience or knowledge.

It is wrong to argue that the concept is quite enough, and that we can proceed from the concept to posit real being. The mere concept is a problem in meaning. It is not fully significant in and by itself. Its full significance is only derived from experience. Does the concept mean anything? If it does, then that meaning must be capable of being realised in experience. We must have an experience of the most perfect being. This; is the only legitimate ground of meaning.

The method of philosophy cannot be purely rational in the sense that all we have to do is to start with certain *a priori* concepts, and deduce all our philosophical conclusions from them. Such knowledge would be in the end empty and inconclusive. The business of philosophy is a more live business. It is not to analyse concepts, but to analyse our experience. It is the only proper way to rise to a knowledge of the super-sensible, if that knowledge is admissible.

CHAPTER II

From Metaphysics to Epistemology

WE said that the subject-matter of metaphysics is the super-sensible and transcendental ground of the sensible and the empirically known world. Can this ultimate ground of all reality be known?

We know the answer of Kant to this question. He held that any kind of transcendental reality was not knowable. He analysed our knowledge of reality as it is, and tried to determine the limits of that knowledge. He took it for granted that we have in science the prototype of all knowledge. This knowledge has sensible intuition as its basis. And since we have no other intuition of reality, he came to the conclusion that knowledge of metaphysical reality was not even possible. True, we have certain ideas, the ideas of reason, that relate to what is transcendental. But they are regulative only. They cannot be the basis of any knowledge about what is essentially super-sensible. This conclusion however was not reached by him after a free and

unfettered investigation of all the facts of our experience taken as a whole. He pre-determined the issue. He started with the supposition that we can only know that which is sensibly given to us. He denied any intuition of reality other than this. He left no room for any other kind of knowledge. His criticism of knowledge accordingly was not thorough enough. It gave no positive results. It did not indicate real knowledge anywhere. He ended on an agnostic note. It was at bottom a new form of dogmatism, not dogmatism about the nature of ultimate reality, but dogmatism about the nature of knowledge as such. What is needed therefore is a higher and constructive criticism, or a free interpretation of our experience taken as a whole. We shall then know whether there are any limits of knowledge and whether the super-sensible is or can be known.

There is a belief that in philosophy we are not concerned with a new form of knowledge or intuition. That might well be left to mystics and religious enthusiasts. What we should really seek is rational knowledge. But what are we to understand by rational knowledge in philosophy? Reason has its own legitimate sphere in the sciences and in mathematics, where we employ inductive and deductive reasoning respectively. In this sphere,

reason is constructive. It leads to positive results. Inductive reasoning indeed does not give us absolute truth. But it gives us truth for all practical and human purposes. Deductive reasoning leads to more certain knowledge. But this knowledge is true only in its formal aspect, not in its material aspect. There is no sphere of knowledge in which both matter and form are derived directly from reason.

Still it is true that in the sciences we reach certain truths through reason. Reason here is constructive. It formulates positive principles of explanation and justifies them by a reference to facts. Indeed, its explanations are all provisional and progressive. The theories of to-day may be fictions of to-morrow. But this is how truth is humanly possible. We have at least the consolation that reason is on our side, and that the theories are good working hypotheses. It is different in philosophy. Theoretical knowledge in philosophy is worse than useless. Scientific theories can be verified by the facts. A philosophical theory could never be so verified. The same set of facts seems compatible with different philosophical positions. These are held to explain the same facts; and there is no rational test, strictly speaking, to which they could be put. The truth is that the so-called philosophical

theories are not rationally constructed. They represent certain personal or spiritual intuitions. Ultimately all philosophical truth has this character. Reason has a secondary place only. Its role is critical, not constructive. We want to know metaphysical reality; and for any knowledge of this reality intuition is indicated. Reason may be a means for the elucidation of this intuition. It cannot be a substitute for it.

We said that to know metaphysical reality, we must have an appropriate intuition. But how is this possible? We have only one kind of intuition, and that is sensible intuition. And this does not always give us the truth. We are sensibly aware of many things, which prove to be unreal in the end. Direct intuition does not always give us the truth. What we directly intuit, we believe to be real. But this belief may prove to be false. It is therefore argued by some philosophers that reality cannot be known in any direct and immediate intuition. Reality can only be truly known when the immediate is fully mediated. Truth is mediate-immediate. It consists, in the end, of a set of judgments, cohering together, supplementing each other, and together constituting the knowledge of all reality.

Now it is possible that we do not know the truly immediate. But it is wrong to say that the imme-

diate does not give us the truth or that it makes for error. It can be held, we suppose, that we do not know the immediate as such. Sensible intuition is as far as we can go in this direction. But here our knowledge is already mediated. The immediate purely as such would not stand up as object. Thought or imagination is an essential constituent of any experience of objectivity. We may therefore have to admit that we have no knowledge of the immediate merely as such. But it does not appear to be true that error is due to the immediate character of knowledge. Error can be otherwise explained.

It is so explained on the view, held by some philosophers, that there is no room for error in the direct acquaintance which we have with the sense-data, and that error only arises when we proceed on the basis of these sense-data to make certain judgments about things. There is no error in direct sense-awareness; there is error only in our thinking or in judgment. Indeed, it can be argued against this view that there is no direct awareness of any *object* which does not involve judgment, and that all our sensible knowledge is mediated knowledge. There is room for error in the most primitive form of perception or sensible awareness. But in spite of this criticism, the point that error is due to

thought, and that immediacy gives truth alone, does not seem to be affected.

A similar view is put forward by Vedantic writers who maintain that in any case of illusory perception, there is an element which is directly given, namely the "this-ness", and that illusion is entirely due to our attributing an epithet to "this" which the latter does not sustain. We say "this is a snake." When we correct this illusion, we say "this is not a snake, —this is a rope." In other words, "this-ness" remains unaffected by the correction. It is the only immediate element in perception. The rest is all judgment. There is no error in immediate knowledge, there is error only in thought. Here too the criticism might be made that we have no awareness of a *pure* "this", and that in all our knowledge, however immediate, the "this" is necessarily qualified. There is no such thing as "this" apart from all qualification. The "this" is not "this" if it is not a qualified "this". But the original contention is once again not affected that all error is due to thought, and that there is no error in the direct intuition of reality if we admit such intuition. All that we need add is, that if direct intuition is to be recognised by us as true, it must stand the test of rational criticism. This is the only way to avoid error and to rise to the conscious recognition of truth.

It may now be said that any kind of supersensible intuition of reality is not a fact of our present experience. It may become possible later on, and after reason has prepared the ground for it. This preparatory work of reason is undertaken by philosophy. It clears certain obstacles and gives us what may be called an indirect knowledge of supersensible reality. Philosophy does not, and cannot, go beyond this. It does not itself lead to any direct knowledge. It is the business of practical religion to pick up the threads here, and to achieve the consummation of the process of reasoning through direct intuition. Thus reason must come first. This must be followed by some kind of spiritual culture or self-purification. Together they will help to realise the end.

It appears to us that this view is untenable. The intuition which we might have as the result of a spiritual discipline may be satisfying in itself, but it will have no rational warrant. The satisfaction which it will give will be no more than psychical. The intuitiou comes *after* reason, and not as the *result* of reason. It has no philosophical value. The average person will be quite within his limits to discredit it. And then the idea that reason can give us indirect knowledge of transcendent or supersensible reality lacks reason. The problems of

reason are necessarily based upon experience. But if all our experience is sensible, how can we have any problem outside of it? How can we have a problem about the transcendent? We may indeed create a problem in this connection for reason when we admit the transcendent on religious grounds. But then we have no natural problem; and our solution cannot have a completely rational character. We must have some super-sensible intuition of reality to begin with, if we are ever to go beyond the empirical world, or to make to ourselves a problem with regard to what transcends our experience of this world.

But do we, as a matter of fact, have any intuition of reality which is not sensible? Now it is certain that our experience is not restricted to sensible objects. It is as wide as reality itself. Nobody can say what exactly are the limits of his experience. For when once he has determined those limits, he is conscious of not having included himself within those limits. He goes beyond all limits. And he is conscious of the fact. He is conscious of himself as somehow limitless. How can we say that his experience is restricted to the sensible alone? There are all grades and levels of experience. It would be sheer dogmatism to say that all our knowledge is limited to the empirically-given facts. At the same

time, we are certainly not explicitly conscious of the highest grade. We cannot definitely claim to know any kind of super-sensible reality to begin with. This knowledge has yet to be elucidated. And it can only be elucidated through a criticism of our experience taken as a whole. Reason has an almost unlimited scope here. It starts with experience. It does not add to or subtract from this experience. It keeps it as it is. What it actually does is to seek to show up experience in its naked form,—to analyse it, to interpret it and to bring out its true significance. This is the only legitimate function of reason in philosophy. And it is through the exercise of this function, negative though it is, that reason becomes the means, and the sole means for us, of getting at philosophic truth. We may truly say that through reason we rise to the direct intuition of metaphysical reality. Philosophical reasoning has thus affinities with mysticism.

We said that experience is as wide as reality itself. What do we exactly mean by this? We do not evidently mean that we know all that there is. We are quite conscious of being ignorant of many things. But whether we actually know or we do not know, we are quite certain that all reality is ultimately intelligible in terms of some form of experience. There is nothing that really transcends

our experience. This experience is the ultimate fact. Being, wherever it might be and whatever it might be, is intelligible only through it. In this sense we can say that experience comprehends all being. By a study of the subject and its functions, we may be said to know all that is the product of the function or that realises its particular form of being through the function. Philosophy is in this sense essentially a subjective study. It proceeds from the subject to the nature of reality.

Our contact with reality is not all sensible contact. It is as varied as reality itself. It is because our intuition goes beyond the sensible and accepts a higher reality, that we have any metaphysical problem at all. While therefore we analyse and criticise our sensible experience or empirical knowledge in general, it is equally important that we should consciously direct our attention to that higher form of intuition which would not be open to criticism and which would be presupposed as true by any criticism whatsoever. Criticism is necessary, but it is not enough. We must also be able to see. Philosophy is in this sense more than criticism or negative reasoning only. It is a sort of transcendental psychology. We have to see as well as to interpret and to understand.

CHAPTER III

Theory Of Knowledge

WE seek to know ultimate reality. But why do we go so far at all? Do we know reality anywhere? If we do, that is ultimate for us. Reality does not need to be further grounded. All reality is ultimate reality, or it is no reality at all. Thus we do not have two problems of knowledge, one relating to ultimate or metaphysical reality, and the other relating to reality of our everyday experience. There is only one problem of knowledge, and that is knowledge of reality as such.

The limits of this problem however must not be artificially restricted, as is often done. It is thought that in order to have a valid theory of knowledge, we must not depart from common-sense. We must start with the assumption that there is some valid knowledge of things. All that we are required to do is to construct a theory which will fit in with these accepted facts of knowledge. The fact of knowledge is our starting point. Its

analysis is our end. But this analysis must not transcend the limits of the original fact. It must not throw doubt upon our present knowledge of things, which is the only knowledge we have.

This restriction of the problem of knowledge is quite illegitimate. If an enquiry into knowledge is pursued under this condition, it will lead nowhere. We shall not be free to criticise knowledge, or to question whether any *prima facie* piece of knowledge is real knowledge at all. That however is the primary problem: When do we have real knowledge? Or, what are the conditions which must be fulfilled in order that the ideal of knowledge may be realised? Indeed, we must not go beyond our present experience. We cannot solve the problem of knowledge or any real problem in a purely *a priori* fashion. But within the limits of that experience, we must be free. We must not assume at the beginning of our enquiry that knowledge must necessarily have a structure which we find in certain *prima facie* cases of knowledge. Our enquiry into knowledge must be free and unrestricted.

We are all agreed that knowledge is of the real alone. We only know that which has real being or that which exists. This is the only knowledge there is. But how shall we determine for ourselves this

fact of knowledge? Evidently, we cannot determine this by an appeal to what exists, but only to our knowledge of the same. Our knowledge is the fundamental fact. It is what may be said to be immediately given to us, not being in itself. In other words, knowledge alone is given and is open to our analysis, not knowledge *plus* being.

The question now is, can knowledge reveal its own truth? For unless it does so, we cannot distinguish a real piece of knowledge from one that is not. This much appears certain. If we start with a preconceived and wrong notion of knowledge, knowledge can never reveal its own truth, and the problem will remain insoluble. If, for example, we suppose that knowledge is ours and being is something outside and independent of us, we can never say, with absolute certainty, as to when is knowledge true. Since we are, by the very nature of the case, confined within our subjective world, we can never be sure that our knowledge does ever conform to reality or that it is ever true knowledge. We can at best believe, through an act of faith, that we know reality. This faith can never be turned into direct knowledge or into certitude. It will always remain a faith. This means that all knowledge that we can possibly have is only an appearance of knowledge. It has the form of knowledge. But nobody can

vouchsafe that it has also the substance of knowledge.

It appears to us however that the above supposition as to the structure of knowledge is gratuitous. It can only lead to ultimate scepticism. What is our ground for supposing that that *is* the structure of our knowledge? Let us say that this ground is to be found in the nature of our actual contact with reality. That is how we *happen to know*. We do not arbitrarily decide that knowledge should be such and not such. Our knowledge happens to be such. There is no other knowledge we have. Or what is the same thing, we give the name of "knowledge" to a particular form of experience wich has a certain definite internal structure. This structure consists in the dualism of the object known and the subject knowing.

We admit that we have to start with the fact of knowledge as commonly accepted, and then analyse this fact. But this fact can be variously analysed. Let us suppose that the analysis is that in every case of knowledge, the thing known is really independent of the knowledge of it. But how shall we know every such case of knowledge, or distinguish it from apparent knowledge? To argue that the independence is true only in the case of real knowledge and not in the case of apparent knowledge

would involve a circular argument. For how shall we decide that a particular piece of knowledge is real knowledge? We can only decide this by showing that the object known in it is a real object. But again how do we show that the object in question is a real object? We can only do this, when we have proved that the object is known truly. In other words, the reality of knowledge implies the reality of the object, and *vice versa.*

Again, is the distinction between real knowledge and apparent knowledge at all legitimate? If it is, what is our ground for the distinction? Can we make the distinction, by relying on the internal evidence of knowledge itself? But this can decide nothing for us. The internal evidence of knowledge itself is neutral. If it could be decisive, there would be no erroneous knowledge, and therefore no knowledge which has merely the *appearance* of knowledge. All knowledge without distinction would be true knowledge. This is certainly not borne out by the facts. Can we say that we make the distinction through some kind of external evidence, or the evidence of the things themselves? But how shall we approach this external evidence? How shall we obtain it? The reality of things is not given to us independently of our knowledge of those things. We cannot appeal to the things

themselves. Any response of things to this appeal will come under the same judgment. On the view under consideration then, we cannot make the distinction between real knowledge and apparent knowledge. Our analysis of knowledge as knowledge of an independent reality would be indiscriminately true of both false knowledge and true knowledge. In other words, it would be true of all apparent knowledge. This does not resolve the problem of knowledge for us. It keeps it alive.

The alternative analysis, which we accept, is that wherever we *seem to know* things which are independent, we do not *really* know, and that the independence in question is a function of the so-called knowledge itself. It is not real independence. This can be a general analysis of all knowledge which is ordinarily supposed to be true or supposed to be false. The distinction between true knowledge and false knowledge accordingly is not based upon the reality or independence of the things said to be known. It can only be based upon the structure of knowledge as such; or what is the same thing, the internal evidence of knowledge. Knowledge is true or false, because it has a certain internal form or it does not have that form. So far as the independence of the object is concerned, it is only apparent or illusory, *never real.*

This analysis can be justified. It is evident that we do not proceed from the given independence of things to the knowledge of those things. We do not argue, "A, B, C etc are things independent of us. We become aware of them. Therefore we really know them." We can only argue, "We become aware of A, B, C, etc. This awareness has a *prima facie* form which we call "knowledge." We deduce the independence of A, B, C etc as the meaning of this form." This form of experience which we call "knowledge" is distinct from other forms. It gives a status to the object which the object does not have in any other form, as for example when we imagine an object or will it. It is by the analysis of the form of experience, which is distinguishable only subjectively, that we proceed to conclude that A, B, C etc are idependent entities. The so-called independence then is a deduction from the particular subjective mode of experience.

This analysis may not be generally accepted. It may be argued against it, that our subjective knowing may have a real counterpart in the objective world. It is not necessary that all independence should be a function of knowledge. Secondly, the function of knowing would not be that function, and so distinct from other subjective functions such as imagining etc., if the object said to be known were

not *really* distinct and independent of the knowing of it. Such independence must be true of at least some piece of knowledge, if knowledge is to be a real fact of experience. Lastly, it is an evident self-contradiction to suppose that every case of knowledge is a case of apparent knowledge only. For how can we have apparent knowledge, if there is no real knowledge anywhere? And yet our position involves the thesis that all our knowledge is apparent only, not real knowledge. The object being, as a rule, a function of the subject, there is no room for any true knowledge. All knowledge becomes apparent knowledge without the possibility of exhibiting its "apparent" character.

As to the first objection, it is really immaterial whether the subjective function of knowing has in fact an objective counterpart or it does not have. Something which can by no possible means be *proved* to be a fact or not a fact is no problem for us. If the object really exists in itself, we can never *prove* that it does so. If it does not exist in itself, we are equally helpless to show that it does not. We simply cannot go beyond our knowledge, to adduce any proof one way or the other. All that we are mainly concerned to interpret and understand is the subjective fact of knowing. The subjective fact of knowing *means* the independence of the object.

But this meaning can be sustained, even when there is no real object. For we cannot deny the possibility of illusory knowledge, where the independence of the object is meant, but where this independence is admittedly not real.

Let us say that the very conception of "knowledge" *implies* that the object known must be *really independent* of the knowledge of it. Our answer is that there is no such implication. Every conception must be based upon facts. And there is no fact to justify the implication. What we find is that every *prima facie* fact of knowledge, whether true or false, has the same internal structure. After all we cannot go beyond the internal evidence of knowledge. We cannot bring in the evidence of some other knowledge. For that would not solve the question of this knowledge, without raising a similar problem with regard to its own evidence. If we are merely analysing a particular piece of knowledge, then its implications must be contained wholly in it. The fact of cancelling knowledge proves that the implication which we here draw is not true.

It may be argued that we are contradicting ourselves. On our own hypothesis, there can be no outside evidence and no cancelling knowledge. Every piece of knowledge is self-sufficient, and contains its own truth or falsehood. How can we draw upon

the evidence of cancelling knowledge in order to show that a given piece of knowledge may be false. We contend that if we drop all reference to the cancelling knowledge, we might still have knowledge. But this knowledge cannot be determined to be either true or false. There is no possible test. Can we still continue to call it "knowledge"? It is clearly part of our meaning of what we call knowledge that it should be either true or false. Knowledge which is neither is no knowledge. And yet by dropping all reference to cancelling knowledge, we have reduced ourselves to a situation in which knowledge is neither true nor false. We must either choose between such knowledge which is no knowledge, or we must admit the evidence of cancelling knowledge which disproves certain implications arbitrarily drawn.

It is not, "*because* a thing is real, *therefore* the possibility of knowledge." The hypothetical clause is unprovable. It is, "*because* we have knowledge, *therefore* the reality or the independence of the object." This reality or independence is thus a function of knowledge, not knowledge a function of it. The term "implication" in this connection has two different senses. When we say that the fact of knowledge implies the reality or the independence of the object, this is true in one sense and not true

in another sense. It is not true in the sense that what is implied has the same reality as the implying term. The implying term is knowledge. The object has no reality co-ordinate with the reality of knowledge. If it has, then this reality goes beyond the strict limits of implication; it cannot possibly be implied. One real thing cannot imply another real thing. If the object is real in itself, so far it cannot be the implication of another real fact. The fact of knowledge can never possibly imply another real fact, the existence of the object *in itself.* It can only imply it as part of its own significance or meaning. It is in this latter sense that the reality of the object or the independence of the object is implied by the fact of knowledge. In other words, the independence of the object is part of the meaning of the knowledge-function. It is not *real independence*, which would be more than the implicate of knowledge. Knowledge implies the object as the correlate of the knowledge-function. It does not imply it as something transcending the latter.

The second objection too can easily be met. The distinction of knowledge from other modes of subjective functioning can be achieved, without postulating real existence of the object said to be known. It is sufficient that this object *appears* to exist in itself unlike, let us say, the purely imaginary object. The

imaginary object certainly does not exist in itself. Nor is it necessary that the supposedly known object should do so. The distinction is valid only as far as it goes. It has reference merely to the appearances. If it is argued that by reducing the object to a function of knowing, the distinction of knowing from imagining dis-appears, we have to admit that the distinction need not be ultimate. If we want to have an ultimate distinction between the two, the internal structure of knowledge may need to be radically different.

This brings us to the last objection. Does our position involve that all our knowledge is apparent knowledge only, and that there is no such thing as real knowledge? If it does, it is a self-contradiction. A piece of knowledge cannot be apparent, if the term "apparent" has no definitive meaning. We contrast the "apparent" with the "real." Either then we must admit that there is such a thing as real knowledge, or it is meaningless to call any piece of knowledge "apparent." Our view is that there is such a thing as real knowledge, which alone deserves to be called knowledge. But this knowledge does not have a dualistic structure or the subject-object structure. It is knowledge which is different in essential form, and therefore different in kind.

CHAPTER IV

Knowledge Of Nature

WE have so far considered in a general way the inadequacy of the dualistic form of knowledge. We shall now consider the specific problem of "knowledge of nature" and give further arguments why we do not regard that form to be ultimate. Knowledge of objects is not real knowledge. It does not fulfil the meaning of our conception of knowledge.

It will be admitted that knowledge to be knowledge must be revelatory of the real. The object said to be known must have self-existence or existence independent of knowledge. The knowledge-relation must be a relation that is external to it. Or what is the same thing, the object must exist prior to the knowledge of it just as it appears in knowledge.

It would not now do to say that knowledge of a particular object, being knowledge, is revelatory of the real in the above sense. It is just our question whether knowledge of a particular object is

knowledge at all. If it were knowledge, then there should be no room for any correction of this knowledge. But the very fact that it lacks self-evidence and that there always is room for correction, raises a legitimate doubt whether it is knowledge. This doubt cannot be resolved by an appeal to some other piece of knowledge which has the same structure. Knowledge is not knowledge unless it evidences its own truth. This is not possible with the dualistic structure of knowledge which we have assumed.

That knowledge of any object whatsoever lacks self-evidence will be generally admitted. Doubt is inalienable from it. We can always ask, is reality such or not such? Our knowledge gives us no ground to answer this question in a definite way. We naturally go forward to supplement this knowledge by some other knowledge, to harmonise it with the rest of our experience, and even to correct it. But in the end, we do not bridge the gulf between the subjective and the objective. The harmony or the self-consistency which we have achieved remains a purely subjective affair. Knowledge has not fulfilled its purpose of revealing an objective real. It never can.

This conclusion is reinforced by a psychological analysis of the knowledge-process. That analysis shows that we are never simply and directly aware of a given real. The real which we recognise to be

given is constituted by the knowing of it. Knowing is an act. The thing known is a product of the act. Knowing is not a passive affair. It is constructive. It constructs or makes its object. It has in this respect affinities with imagination and conation.

It may be argued that knowing is not a process. When we know, we simply know. Knowledge is a unique and ultimate fact. What precedes actual knowledge may be anything, it may be a process, but it is not knowledge. We do not know by bits or gradually; what we know, we know all at once and immediately. This actual knowledge is not a process.

If this argument is correct, we must not speak of an *act* of knowledge. Or if we still speak of it, we must not understand by it either a process or the culmination of a process. We must understand by it simply the fact of awareness, or what we understand by expressions such as "awareness of A", "awareness of B", etc. Now it is not our purpose to deny that awareness is, by its very nature, immediate. There is nothing more immediate. There is no *process* in it. There is nothing of the *act* about it. We can detect no *change* in awareness; so that we cannot say, thus it begins and thus it ends; and when we do say so, all that we can mean is that there is awareness of one

object at the beginning and awareness of another object at the end. There is no process in one and the same awareness. All that we can legitimately say about it is that it *is* or that it *is not*.

This however is only half the truth. The other half is that awareness considered in this way is considered quite simply, and without its reference to the object. The moment this reference is brought in and we speak of the awareness *of* an object, something more than mere awareness is needed in order to account for the fact. This something more is subjective activity or subjective function. With complete subjective passivity, no object would ever get formed or defined in consciousness; and there would be no knowledge. Passivity is the character of the object. The object evidently does nothing in order to be known. And when it is known, it is known as the wholly passive factor in knowledge. It merely *is*. Does the subject too do nothing in order to know? If it really did nothing, if it exercised no function, it might be another object. It would not be the subject that knows. The subject is nothing if it is not a functioning subject; and the function consists in giving form progressively to the object. As I function, the object emerges, and with it the distinction of the knowing subject and the object known. The subject is in this sense

constitutive of the object; for without the function of the subject, the object would not be object. Knowledge never does arise in the subject as a finished whole in which the subject has no part. The part of the subject is all-important; without it, there is no object to be known.

Kant drew attention to this fact and based his entire epistemological view on it. It may be granted that the senses are passive in knowledge. But so far knowledge does not arise. Knowledge only arises as the result of a subjective process. This process does not *start with* a well-defined datum. The datum only emerges as the result of the process. Apart from the process, there is no datum; there is nothing given; there is no object. The object must be *posited*, if it is to stand up as object against the subject. Reality may be anything in itself. But it can never be *object in itself.* The objectivity of the object is unintelligible without the subjective function of knowing. It is the latter that explains the possibility of the former.

The object is not something *in itself* of which we become *simply* aware. There is no simple awareness of the object anywhere. Knowledge of the object, which is the only type of knowledge ordinarily recognised, is not to be understood as awareness of a self-existing reality. The simplest or the most

direct object-awareness is still awareness in which the subject has conceived or constructed the object. The ideal content which is attributed to the real in a judgment is no more than a conception of the subject. The real which is known in the judgmental form of knowledge is thus all conception. Even if we grant it some kind of reality apart from the conception, even if we grant it what we call sensible existence, that existence cannot be understood except as a certain appearance *to us*. This appearance has no reality in itself; for it is the essence of an appearance that it cannot be realised without its relation to the percipient.

The question may be raised,—can the sense-given element or the sensum as we may call it be entirely denied? Now it may be that we cannot deny it. But is it the reality itself, or something that reality acting upon our sense-organs has produced in us? In the latter case, it is not the real or the original thing. But even if it is the real thing, we have no awareness of it apart from the definition given to it by thought. The object may, in a very general way, be represented by "this." But what is *this* apart from the many qualitative and relational properties made possible by thought? Take away the entire contribution of thought, and the *this* collapses. There is nothing left of it as any possible object of

knowledge. It may be thought that we start with something given or certain sense-data which we then proceed to define further in judgment. But what knowledge have we of this something "given" except as it is already defined in a judgment? The farthest down we go in our analysis, we can never eliminate thought altogether, or get to something which is purely given. We never know the purely given. It is a fiction. The object is literally a product of thought.

The sensible world, however we may regard it, is an appearance, not a reality. Reality must not be object of any kind. It must not appear. Can it be conceived as something at the back of the appearances, a sort of *thing in itself* that demands to be known? So conceived, it would still be an appearance. It would not be essentially different from the objects which we know. It would only be an object of another kind. For anything is an object which has a being that is external to us.

The question arises,—are appearances nothing? Do they imply no substantial being? We often speak of the appearances *of* reality. If that is so, there must be a relation between appearances and reality; and any knowledge of the former must give us a peep into the latter.

The distinction between appearance and reality is not peculiar to thinkers like Kant. It is common to other philosophers of a different philosophical persuasion. There are philosophers who recognise that our knowledge of things does not always conform to the exact nature of things. The thing for example is believed to have a certain fixed and definite character. But its appearance to us varies according to various factors connected with the percipient. Thus we cannot help making the distinction between reality which is the thing as we believe it to be in itself, and its appearances to us which are various and conflicting. We shall call the latter sense-data. But while we have to make the above distinction, there is a real relation between the thing and its appearances. We refer the several appearances of a thing to the thing. We suppose that in some way they reveal the thing to us. In fact, without the appearances, we could not know the thing. The thing as it is in itself is not directly given to us in perception. What is directly given are the sense-data. We know the thing indirectly through them. We know the thing as what is described by the sense-data. We know it by description only.

The question naturally arises, what is the relation between the thing and the sense-data? It is argued that the thing is probably identical with

a particular sense-datum in each class of sense-data. But it is not identical with the rest of the sense-data in that class. These latter are various and change with certain factors in the perceptual situation. Thus certain of the sense-data directly reveal the thing to us. The thing *is* as it appears to us in them. Other sense-data do not directly reveal the thing. But still we can say that they have a causal relation to it, being caused by the thing. Or if we do not make any such distinction between the sense-data, we may even say that all the sense-data in respect of a thing reveal the thing to us. What then is the thing? It is nothing in itself. It is wholly lost in the appearances. It is a name for certain groups of sense-data, each group having an internal unity of its own and a law which governs the variations of its members. Thus all the sense-data taken together are supposed to reveal the thing, which however is not a reality independent of them. It is what is called a logical construction. It is clear that in the latter view, the very distinction of appearance and reality disappears. For the thing is reduced to its appearances. There is no reality over and above the latter which the latter may be said to reveal. Is the former view, namely that there is a real relation between the two, tenable?

Appearances may be related to reality. But

those who take this position cannot, in our opinion, legitimately make the distinction of appearance and reality. They interpose the sense-datum between the thing and the percipient. But is the sense-datum an appearance at all? Is it not something in its own right? The sense-datum is supposed to be directly apprehended, not the thing. It is known by direct acquaintance, and therefore it is known as it is. But then it is just reality itself. Our definition of reality is simple enough. It is the name of something which is the object of true knowledge or what exists independently of our knowledge of it. The sense-data are supposed to be such objects. They are not constructions of thought. They are the reality. There is no need to go beyond them to what is called the physical object. The physical object has no rational use for us. It is nothing to us.

It may be thought that the physical object is a necessary postulate of our experience. That may be so on the view that what is objectively known is a substance with qualities. The qualities cannot exist in themselves, and require a substance in which they may be grounded. This substance we call the physical object. But then, on that view, there are no sense-data. The sense-data do not require anything beyond them to be what they are. They are

quite real in themselves. And being real, they cannot be further grounded. We thus find that once the appearance is supposed to have self-existence, it takes the place of reality itself. The appearance does not reveal anything beyond itself called the physical object. It reveals itself alone. There is nothing beyond it to be revealed.

The notion of "appearance" is significant only when what appears to us does not exist in its own right, but is our construction. It is thus necessarily distinct from reality which is not our construction. But then appearance understood in this way cannot be intelligibly related to reality. All that we can say is that it is a misrepresentation of reality. It cannot possibly reveal reality. A relation may be said to be intelligible when it holds either between two *given* entities, or between two *real* entities. Thus we can conceive a relation between two appearances, for both seem to be given; or between two real things, for both are said to exist. We can never conceive a relation between what is given and what cannot be given, or between what exists and what does not exist. And yet such is the nature of the dualism of "appearance" and "reality." How can any real relation be possible between them? We cannot even say that reality is external to us, and that it *causes* the perception of a certain

appearance in us. The moment we think of reality in this external way, we have given reality an objective being. The things which we actually perceive have just this kind of being. Where then is the distinction between the so-called reality and its appearance to us? Have we not degraded reality to an appearance? As to causality, the things of our perception, which we have called appearances, have causality over us, if anything has such causality. For they alone affect us, and not what lies beyond them. Reality as distinct from appearance can neither be external to us nor cause anything in us.

We conclude that reality is the ground of the appearances, for the latter have no self-existence. But this relation is not to be understood as any kind of real relation. It is a relation which in the end is no relation. Appearances do not reveal reality. If we realise anything to be an appearance, we reject it as what is neither itself real, nor related to the real. An appearance is, by its very nature, *a mere appearance*. It vanishes, on inspection, into nothing. It may reveal reality,—but only through self-negation. It is through the cancellation of an appearance that is false, that we get to know the truth. The only relation then which an appearance can have to reality is one of false identity; and this is not a real relation.

The ultimate ground of all the appearances cannot be itself an appearance. It cannot be any kind of objective being. It can only be the true subject. It is on the latter that the appearances can be seen to depend for their being, and not upon a supposed thing-in-itself beyond them. The notion of the latter is unnecessary. It explains nothing. If anything explains the appearances for what they are, it is the subject. The subject makes them, transcends them, and constitutes their only real ground.

It may be argued that reality cannot be the subject as such. The subject is only a factor in knowledge. The other factor is the object. Two different interpretations of the object may be considered here: (a) It may be that sense-data are all there is objectively. They may be found in definite ordered groups. Each group may be associated with a definite name which is the name of a thing. But the thing is not something over and above the sense-data. It is merely a name for the ordered unity of the group. These sense-data are not creations of the subject. They are real entities in the objective world.

(b) It may be that the sense-data are subjective, being dependent for their being upon subjective factors. But these are not the only thing. Given all the subjective factors, no knowledge of an object takes place. The minimum required for any knowledge

to arise is that the subjective must come into some kind of direct relation with an external reality, or what we may call the physical object. The resultant knowledge is the knowledge of the sense-data. We cannot indeed relate the sense-data intelligibly to the physical object. But there is some relation. We can at least say that the physical object is *a cause* in the production of the sense-data. But we cannot go further. We cannot categorically assert a particular relation between the two. We have no possible evidence. Our knowledge is limited to the sense-data. It does not go beyond them to the physical object. All that we can do is to take our stand in this matter upon common-sense statements and conceive some kind of relation between the sense-data and the physical object. We cannot prove any of these statements to be true. But we can give some analysis which will meet the case.

Let us examine each of these two positions. In (a), the sense-data are taken to be the reality, and the physical thing a fiction. Now we meant by a "sense-datum" to begin with "a certain appearance to us" as distinct from the reality. The conception was coined to account for variations of appearances to us, while we believed the real object to have no such variations in itself. We have drifted away from this position. The sense-datum

has become itself the thing, having a definite character independent of the subject. This is what we believed to be true of the physical object. The sense-datum has become equivalent to it. It has become the physical object, existing in its own right, and revealing its character as it is. Instead of one physical object, appearing variously to us, we have a multitude of physical objects in its place. Every so-called appearance of a thing is the thing itself, existing in its own right. Common-sense is outraged. But is that all?

It is part of our meaning of what we call a sense-datum that it should have no more content in it than what appears to us in sensible awareness. If anything has a reserve of being, to that very extent it cannot be a sense-datum to us. But when we say that the sense-datum has self-existence or has reality, is this self-existence also a sense-datum to us? Evidently, we have no sense-datum of it. In what sense then can we say that a sense-datum which has no more in it than what appears to us has being or existence in itself? Are we not going beyond the strict limits of what we actually know objectively? It would be more reasonable to say that the existence of a sense-datum *is* just its appearance to us. The *esse* is the *percipi*.

We believe, rightly or wrongly, that what exists

is not a mere surface or an appearance, fixed and immutable. Whatever exists inter-acts with other existents; and through this inter-action, it can also change. But can a sense-datum inter-act? It can only inter-act when it has some reserve of being, when it is conceived as a centre of energy that can excercise influence and be influenced. But then will it be a mere sense-datum any longer? Do we see in it its energy-centre, its inner activities, etc? Evidently we do not. Again, a sense-datum cannot change. There is nothing more in it beyond its appearance, that can act or be acted on. The being of a sense-datum is exhausted in its appearance to us. We conclude that a sense-datum *is* as sensed. If the sense-data are all that there is objectively, the world which is made up of them must be a world of shadows without substance.

(b) We shall now examine the second argument. Here we admit a distinction between the physical thing and its appearance to us or the sense-datum. The argument is based upon the notion that reality is causal, and that knowledge arises as the result of reality acting upon us. This causal notion of reality appears to us to be quite erroneous. It is evident that what can possibly indicate any objective reality is the actual presentation that is

given in knowledge. We cannot go behind this presentation, and take any cognisance of a reality acting upon us, or causing us to perceive. We have no knowledge of any such reality. Our reality begins when something has been cognised as object. We cannot go behind this cognition and reconstitute it out of elements which are in no cognitive relation to us. The transcendent causal object is purely imaginary. Indeed, we may suppose that the causal object is not transcendent. It is what is actually apprehended by us. But this too is untenable. What is apprehended is a product of two factors, the one objective and the other subjective. This product we have called the sense-datum. It is evident that the physical object is not the only cause in the perception. What we perceive is a joint product of the object and the subject. We cannot accordingly dissociate from the product the subjective factor, and trace the whole product to the object outside. What we perceive is not the object that causes us to perceive.

Let us however suppose that the subjective factor is quiescent and that what we perceive is the physical object as it is in itself. In that case, there is no room for interposing between this object and the subject anything called a sense-datum. But then how do we explain illusory appearance or error ?

Whatever we perceive will be real. It will be the physical object. Is this not equating the physical object with the sense-datum ? It may be said that some explanation can be found for facts of erroneous perception. When we perceive truly, we perceive the physical object as it is in itself. When we misperceive, this is due to subjective factors. But then how do we decide that under any set of circumstances, we perceive the very thing ? The subjective factors being always present, we cannot say that error is not always present. There must be some logical grounds for the distinction of truth and falsehood.

There remains the desperate objection that mere subjective factors do not explain our knowledge of the objective world. But neither does the hypothesis of an objective reality which we can never perceive as it is in itself. We contend that there is every appearance of an extra-subjective reality. But it is only an appearance. On closer scrutiny, we find that there is no rational ground for it. Besides, the fact that in dreams, we seem to apprehend things without there being any real things that can be apprehended, disposes of the objection that mere subjective factors cannot be sufficient to account for our apprehension of objects.

We conclude that any theory of knowledge based upon the reality of the object in some form or other breaks down.

CHAPTER V

Introspective Knowledge

KNOWLEDGE of nature may be phenomenal. But this does not appear to be true of our knowledge of mental objects. Here we have the same dualism of subject and object, but the conception of knowledge does not on that account suffer ship-wreck. There is real knowledge of mental events, the sort of events that are known in introspection. These events are directly given to us; and we can, and do, know them as they are in themselves. Our knowledge of sense-objects for example may be phenomenal. But the fact *that* we know them seems to be given to us directly and known by us with absolute certainty. Similarly about other mental events. Indeed, we do not take explicit note of all the mental events that occur. But they occur nevertheless, and we can take note of them as they are in themselves.

The first point to be here considered is whether introspection makes a difference to the mental events or it does not. Mental events may be anything.

But do they remain the same when we know them introspectively? It appears to us that the very attempt to know introspectively introduces subjective interest and subjective selectiveness. It breaks up the original unity of events into fragments. It is these fragments that we then proceed to contemplate. Further, introspective awareness is not a form of pure awareness. It is not as though it stands outside the mental events in a position of complete detachment, that mental events pass before it in review, and that it can throw light upon any of these as it chooses or know them. Introspection is itself a mental event. To begin to introspect is already to stop or arrest the mental flow. It is to introduce a disturbing element in the nature of that which is observed. We observe things not as they are, but under conditions which already tend to modify them.

This is not all. Things introspected into are already past. They can never therefore be said to be directly given to introspection which is itself a mental event following them. They are recreated by the introspective consciousness. And recreation is a form of construction. It cannot be proved that a real object exists of which we become aware introspectively. The object emerges only as we introspectively reflect. Apart from this reflection or going

backwards, there is no object. Our reflection is thus not *presented* with an object, it is *constitutive* of it.

It might be said here that in perception, either external or internal, it is not necessary that the subject and the object should be co-present. Perception may be possible even when the object is already past, but has left a trace behind it. We are directly aware of a distant star. But this does not mean that the star must exist at the time of our awareness. It is almost certain that the star has already moved from the place in which we see it, and that it is no longer there. Moreover, if we are to believe the facts as presented by physics, we could for a very long time continue to perceive the star when the star has been actually destroyed. Even so in mental life. A mental event which has occurred leaves a trace behind it. The object can be revived through this trace.

Now if the account of our perception of a star here given is true, it would not be exactly correct to say that we directly perceive the star. To perceive the star in a place where the star is not, is not to perceive a real star. We perceive the star *to be there*, and the fact is that the star is not there. It would be more correct to say that we project the star rather than that we perceive it. We cannot be said to perceive what does not exist at the time of

our perception, and is not co-present with it. But if we nevertheless insist that the star is perceived, and not merely imagined to be perceived, we must say that the distant star is somehow given in the light-rays which strike the retina. The stimulus at least, said to emanate from the object, is simultaneous with the perception of the object. What is certain is that there can be no perception of any object, whether external or internal, when neither the object nor any stimulus emanating from it, exists. If still the perception takes place, it cannot be a real perception.

It might be contended that granting the above contention, we still become directly aware of mental events or mental objects. We become aware of them as they occur and when they occur. We imagine something, for instance; and we become aware of the fact of imagining at the same time. All imagination is conscious imagination. Similarly, about all other mental events. They are all conscious events. And so knowledge of them is possible even at the time they occur.

This does not appear to us to be a correct analysis. The situation is complicated because mental events do not fall clearly apart or outside each other as physical objects do. They are often believed to overlap and interpenetrate. It therefore *appears* as

though the occurrence of a mental event and our consciousness of it were simultaneous. But how is this possible? Mental events do not exist together in space. They exist successively in time. Our mental life is a series of successive events, and no event is co-present with another event. If I know A, this is a mental event by itself. It may be succeeded by another mental event, namely my awareness of the awareness of A, or it may not be so succeeded. The two awarenesses cannot be simultaneous, and the one cannot be a direct object of the other. No awareness is ever an object of another awareness. And when it becomes an object, it is already past. It has ceased to be real awareness The same analysis holds good of all the events of mental life. These events do not become my objects at the time when they are supposed to occur. And when I do succeed in making them my objects, they are already past. I only know a mental object as something that was, and never as something that is. But this is not the way how something can be known directly or perceived.

It may be said that this is making too much of the successiveness of mental events. We seem to be quite able to retain the awareness of an external object till the second awareness supervenes upon the first. We know a tree. We can now continue

knowing it; and while we know it, we can at the same time know *that* we are knowing it. The first awareness does not necessarily cease when the second awareness comes.

It appears to us that this is not true. The first awareness cannot continue to be awareness and be at the same time known. In so far as it is awareness, it is the subject proper; it is no kind of object. When we treat it as object, it has already ceased to be awareness. What we are doing is to confuse "the real awareness which is no kind of object" with "the object of second awareness which is no awareness." Any real awareness is subject pure and simple. It has a truly spiritual character. The moment however it is rendered an object, it has lost all spiritual character and ceased to be the subject it was; it has acquired the character of inertness of all objects. We must thus make a distinction between the mental fact as something spiritual in itself, and the mental fact as introspectively known. The two facts are not, and cannot be, the same. The former is indistinguishable from the subject as such. The latter is essentially an object and has the same phenomenal character which all objects of external perception are seen to possess.

It may now be said that this is not quite correct. There is no doubt that certain mental events

occur. Indeed, we may not know them *as they occur.* We know them when we introspect. And when we introspect, we render them objects. But as objects, they represent the original reality. There is no distinction between the original mental fact and the same fact as known introspectively. We know many things unreflectively. This knowledge is a fact. It has a dualistic structure. There is in it the subject knowing and the object known. But this distinction is only implicit at the time. It becomes explicit, when we make this first awareness the object of a second awareness or introspective awareness. We cannot now say that the first awareness did not take place at all or that it was not dualistic in form. It did take place, and it did have the distinction of the subject and the object implicit in it. The second awareness has changed nothing. It has merely brought the fact of the original awareness to self-consciousness. We now know *that* we knew. Thus introspection is a true form of knowledge. There is nothing false or phenomenal about it.

If this account is true, the second awareness is a more advanced awareness, and it is at the same time a true form of knowledge. It appears to us that this claim cannot be substantiated. That the mental events as known introspectively really took

place cannot be proved. If they are posited at all, they are posited through the introspective awareness. There is no other evidence for them. But then the evidence of introspective awareness is just in question. If it is supposed to evidence something that is past, the evidence contradicts itself. What is past cannot be the object of present knowledge. The introspective awareness has a certain object; but that object is neither past nor is it real independently of the awareness in question. What might be real in the above sense is the original awareness in which no distinction of the subject and the object had emerged. But we cannot describe this awareness in terms of the dualism in question. When we say that the distinction of the subject and the object is implicit, we are ignoring the main issue. An implicit distinction must still be a distinction. What is the evidence that there was *any* distinction at all? All that we can possibly understand by an implicit distinction is "a real distinction not known." But this is just self-contradictory. If a distinction is not known, on what ground do we assert it to be a fact? The truth is that the distinctions made by the introspective consciousness are quietly imported where they do not obtain. The original fact, if it is a fact, is without distinctions and without any relations. It cannot be the same as the fact which

arises as the object of the introspective awareness, which is fully differentiated, and which is nothing without the distinctions.

But can we deny the fact of reflection? Do we not reflect upon mental events that are past? I see a stone in front of me. I can now reflect that the stone was directly perceived by me. Each mental state can be reflected upon in a later state. This reflection brings to explicit consciousness what is experienced before. It is a true form of consciousness. It does not create or construct its object. It finds it in experience.

It appears certain now that reflection is not a mode of simple awareness of a given content. There is nothing presented to reflection to reflect on. What we reflect on is already past. Again, this past mental state is not reflected on as it was, but as differentiated into subject and object. Without this differentiation, no mental state can have any objectivity. The object of reflection is thus never something simply as it is in itself. It is something as recreated by the reflective consciousness. The dualism of the subject and the object is entirely the work of this consciousness.

We are in the habit of thinking that the subject-object distinction is essential to all knowledge. But

the truth is that the distinction does not exist in anything that we can legitimately call knowledge. It arises as the result of reflection. It is only in reflection that the distinction is made, or something is an object *to* a subject. To reflect is to make this distinction. But if we do not reflect, we may be knowing, but this knowledge will never have the dualistic form. Ordinarily, we take it for granted that every piece of knowledge has the dualistic structure,—an object is known by a subject. We forget that this ordinary view is really extra-ordinary. It is based upon what we suppose knowledge to be in reflection. But reflection can never get at the original fact as it is. It makes its facts. All our problems arise from reflection. We have no other stand-point from which to raise any philosophical problem. And reflection first falsifies the original fact and then sets the problem. It is not a mode of true knowledge. It is a mode of imagination. It does not merely reproduce the original. It creates it and makes it in terms of thought. The real is above distinctions and above thought.

It may be argued that we are making too much of some minor difficulty. It cannot be denied that there are mental events that occur. We believe them to occur. Nobody ever seriously denies them. The only question is, how do we get to know them?

Can we not say that we remember them? I can recall the mental state clearly and easily when the time-lapse is short. I have just seen a friend. I can with almost absolute certainty recall that I saw him. But how is memory of mental states possible? Memory presupposes an original perception. And our question just relates to this perception. Is there an original perception of a mental state at all? Do we directly perceive a mental state at the time it occurs? If we do not, as we have shown to be the case, we cannot throw the whole burden of knowledge upon memory.

Let it be granted that introspectively we know mental events. This form of knowledge has at least the appearance of knowledge. The question that here arises is, can we show that this knowledge is ever cancelled? In other words, can there be such a thing as a subjective illusion?

We are familiar with objective illusions. We can therefore argue, with some plausibility, that objective knowledge may not be true knowledge. It may be illusory in character. We do not however seem to be familiar with subjective illusions. We do not even think them possible. We seem directly to know our own mind. There appears to be no room for error here. How can we argue that knowledge of mental events may not be real knowledge or that

it can have an illusory character? We shall now try to show that we have to admit the possibility of subjective illusion.

It is sometimes thought that our mental life is wholly private to us. It has no reference to anything beyond itself. If such were indeed the case, we should be moving in one continuous illusion. For things appear to be external to us and quite real in themselves, while all the while they are our private ideas. There would be no reality outside of us or beyond us. The only reality would be our own self and its states. Our actual life would be very much like a dream.

It is generally accepted therefore that our mental life is not unconnected with objective reality. We do not lead our lives in the privacy of our individual selfs. When we say that our thoughts, feelings etc., are subjective, we do not mean that they have no reference to anything beyond the individual. It is the very essence of subjective function to refer to the object or to external nature in some way, direct or indirect. That this reference may be differently interpreted in the end is certain. But it is equally certain that by the subjective we do not mean a sphere of reality unconnected with the object. The purely subjective without any reference to the object would not be a fact. It

would be an abstraction. What the psychologist studies is not an abstraction, but the concrete fact. He studies the mind not in its isolation from nature, but as it is directly related to nature in all its activities. The mind is not an isolated reality. It has necessary relations with the objective world.

The point that we now want to urge is that in-so-far as the mental implicates the non-mental, it is vitiated by the non-mental. It is not denied that we have illusions in connection with the non-mental or physical nature. A rope may be apprehended as a snake. We perceive what appears to be a snake. We say, here is a snake. Later on, we perceive the same thing to be a rope. We conclude that our first knowledge was erroneous knowledge. But erroneous knowledge is not knowledge. Knowledge to be knowledge must be knowledge of actual being or something that really exists. When there is no real existent, we can only have an illusion of knowledge, not real knowledge. The error in respect of the object is thus transferred to the subjective fact of knowledge. We say, the knowledge of the snake had the appearance of knowledge, but was not knowledge. Thus we have here an illusion which does not stop with the object, but which affects the subjective fact of knowledge itself. What was taken to be knowledge is no longer regarded as knowledge. We no

longer say, we saw the snake. We merely say, we seemed to see the snake, but we did not really see.

Some-one would urge,—but can we deny that we did have the perception of snake? The snake may later on be found to be unreal, and we may cease to perceive it. But before such finding, the perception was really there. It did occur. We did perceive something to be snake. How can we show the perception to be itself illusory, when the perception actually took place?

This argument, it appears to us, is based upon a misunderstanding. Before the snake is cancelled, there is to all appearances a real snake and a real perception of that snake. We have no problem with regard to this perception, as we have no problem with regard to the snake perceived in it. The reality of neither is questioned. Nor is it positively affirmed. It would be positively affirmed when a doubt or a question arose, and we tried to eliminate the doubt and answer the question after going through the relevant evidence and making certain that it was reliable. It is only then that we could make a positive assertion of reality, "the snake does indeed exist!" This stage is not reached prior to the cancelling knowledge. Prior to the cancelling knowledge, we neither assert positively, nor do we deny. We *accept* the appearance of reality for

reality. And because we do not go beyond the appearance to ascertain the truth, there is room for cancellation. The problem which we are considering arises only after this cancellation has taken place; for the cancellation has made a great difference to the original facts. We can no longer contemplate these as though nothing had happened; what has happened to them has completely changed their value as facts.

The object whose status we are considering is not "the perception of a snake before the cancellation has taken place". We are also not considering the status of "the perception of a snake in general". It is argued by some in this connection that what we cannot deny is that something was perceived to have a snake-character. Now it is evident that if we are ever to *perceive* a snake-character, the snake-character must exist in the place in which we perceive it to be. It is part of the meaning of perception that it should have reference to actual being or existence. We can only be said to perceive what exists. What does not exist, is not really perceived; it is merely imagined. If then the snake-character with which we are here concerned has no spatial position, if it is merely a snake-character *in general,* we cannot be said to have perceived it. And not having perceived it, there would be no room for the

cancelling knowledge, this is not a snake. The snake-character with which we are concerned has a position in space. We are accordingly not concerned with the perception of a snake in general, but of *this* snake, after the snake in question is sublated.

The question for us is, can we say that my perception of *this snake* was a real perception *when we know* that the snake was never there and could never have been perceived. Evidently, this perception of an illusory snake could not be a real perception. Accordingly we say, "I did not really perceive any snake, and my so-called perception of this snake was only an illusory perception, or a perception that was no perception." We thus find that there can be subjective illusions even as there are objective illusions. And if, as we have shown, the subjective and the objective are necessarily interrelated, they cannot represent two independent spheres, the one phenomenal and the other noumenal. We conclude that reality is not known either in external nature or in the sphere of the mind.

CHAPTER VI

Knowledge Of Other Selfs

IT may now be argued that the fault lies not in the dualistic structure of knowledge. The distinction of reality and knowledge is inevitable. Knowledge is true when the object of it is real or has independent existence. Knowledge has a necessary reference to such an object. For if there is no real object to be known, what are we to know? Starting then with this dualistic structure, it should be possible to realise the ideal of knowledge.

We shall suppose that we have knowledge of the thing as it is in itself and therefore true knowledge when the object of it is not dead and inert, but when the object is an intelligent entity that reveals itself to us. The object speaks to us, and we understand the object. The subjectivity of knowledge here seems completely ended. We do not construct the object. The object gives itself to us, and we apprehend it as it is in itself.

We have this kind of knowledge when we know *another self*. The question naturally arises, how do

we know another self? It appears to us that we do not know this entity through inference, say from the body or from a certain behaviour of the body. Unless we know the other self already in a more direct way, inference itself could not be established. It is possible to regard all the other so-called selfs as mere automata. Earlier thinkers, as a matter of fact, regarded all animal life as soul-less. The same could be said about human animals. What however makes a difference is that the human animal speaks. We thus know him directly through his use of the term "I" to designate himself.

The term "I" has no socialised meaning. It does not stand, like other terms in common use, for some entity which is common to you, to me and to everybody who is a member of a social group. The term "dog" for instance stands for some entity which is common to us all. The term "I" does not stand for any such common entity or a class of entities. It designates *one individual only;* and he is not always the same individual. The person who addresses me uses the term "I" to designate himself. But I do not use the term "I" to designate him. I use it to designate myself. And so does everybody else. Still when another person speaks of himself as "I," I do not understand by the term "myself" which would be the case if I

used it. I understand by the term the speaking person. This person reveals himself to me not as some dead or inert object which may be meant by the term. He reveals himself to me as the person speaking,—a living, functioning and spiritual entity. The term "I" signifies not a meant something, but the meaning function itself. Thus I know another self as he is in himself, a spiritual being. Is not the ideal of knowledge completely fulfilled here? Nature may be our construction; Spirit is not. The latter reveals itself as it is to us. †

It appears to us that the above argument goes a little too far. The truth seems to be that I have no direct knowledge of any spiritual entity other than *my own self*. My knowledge of other selfs is merely a translation of this knowledge in another context. Could I, for example, know what the term "I" signified when it was used by another person, if I did not know what it signified when it was used by me? Self-awareness is the very ground of our awareness of other selfs. There is no direct intuition of the latter. There is only one intuition of "I", and that is the intuition of my self.

† I am indebted to Prof: K. C. Bhattacharyya for the elucidation of the above point. But I am not sure whether he would accept my interpretation of it or the metaphysical significance which I attach to it.

We are accustomed to think that there are many selfs. But apart from practical considerations which have no theoretical value, there is no *evidence* to support this view. The responsibility of proof or of disproof does not lie with us. It lies with those who assert that there are many selfs. What is absolutely certain is that the self is only indicated by the intuition of "I." This intuition refers to one and one entity only which I call my self. If then there are many selfs, they can only be said to be known in so far as they are formally non-distinct from my self. The subject is not one among others. There are no differences of the subject capable of being proved. Non-difference seems as essential to the subject as difference is to the object.

We conclude that the object can never reveal itself to us. To call something object and to call it a self is a contradiction. The subject alone can reveal itself as it is; and then it is self-known, not known by another subject.

CHAPTER VII

Reality As Subject

WE have so far considered our knowledge of the object, whether it is physical or mental or spiritual. But we cannot stop with criticism, as we cannot stop with mere negation. When we criticise, we naturally adopt a stand-point from which we criticise. We set up a standard of truth which is self-evident to us. We seem to be quite sure what truth should be like. It is because our ordinary knowledge fails to come up to this standard, fails to fulfil the ideal, that it is rejected as inadequate.

We are not conscious of the ideal, much less of the fact that the ideal is in a way already accomplished in our experience. But we have to admit that there is a stand-point in our experience which is beyond criticism and which represents our most certain knowledge. We cannot direct any criticism to it. It is the presupposition of criticism. If we tried to criticise it, we should

have to go beyond it and take up some other standpoint from which to criticise. In other words, criticism cannot be our final attitude to truth. It is only a means to the latter. If we criticise, we must be able to show that absolute truth is not an idle aspiration, that it is already within our grasp, and that it is fully realised at a certain level of our experience which merely needs to be explicated. It is not an abstraction. It is something very concrete and real. For we have true and certain knowledge before we can doubt, find fault and criticise. The question is, what is the nature of this knowledge?

Any form of knowledge that we can reflect upon is a subject-object form of knowledge. We have to describe it as knowledge of such and such an object or knowledge having such and such a content. Once however knowledge is understood to have this dualism, it comes within the scope of our criticism. For the object must be either external or internal to the knowledge of it. If the object is external, the knowledge is bound to be uncertain. It cannot be immediate knowledge. It must necessarily be mediated. If, on the other hand, the object is posited by the subject or is internal to it, knowledge becomes hardly distinguishable from imagination which is a form of creative activity. It is only when knowledge is unmediated by sense or thought,

when reality is absolutely immediate to consciousness, that we can have certitude in knowledge. But such knowledge will not have a dualistic character. We cannot reflect upon it. We cannot criticise it. We cannot bring it forward to our view as something thinkable. We must recognise on the one hand its transcendence in respect of thought, and on the other its immediacy to intuition. This ideal is fulfilled in what is called *pratyagātman* or the immediate self.

Reality is often conceived on the pattern of the object. Objectivity is supposed to be essential to reality. For the object-term in any recognised piece of knowledge stands for independent being. But this notion of reality fails to come up to our ideal of truth. The object represents a failure in knowledge. We thus pass from the notion of reality as object to the notion of reality as subject. The object is known *to* the subject. This relation, signified by the term "to", is in a way vital to it. The object cannot be realised without it. Indeed, it may be supposed to exist independently of the subject. If it does, then it can no longer be spoken of as *object*, or as anything in particular. The subject on the other hand is not known to another subject. If it is known at all, it is in some sense known to itself. This self-knowledge has a peculiar character. It

cannot be compared to our knowledge of external objects. The self is in some sense quite immediate. All other degrees of immediacy must depart from this. It is the absolute degree. The knowing self must be immediate to itself before anything else can be immediate to it in more or less degree. Reality then conceived as subject alone can realise the ideal of knowledge which is immediacy.

There is another reason why the subject gives a truer indication of reality. Ultimate reality is supposed to belong to the whole. For the whole alone is self-subsistent. Anything that is short of the whole will be necessarily related to other elements in the whole. It will have a direct reference to the whole, and will not be intelligible without it. This is what some of the European Idealists mean when they say that the part is adjectival to the whole. The part has no self-existence. It exists in the whole and derives its nature from it. The whole on the other hand cannot depend for its existence upon anything beyond itself. It cannot be related to aught else. It is a true individual. It exists in itself and by itself. It is the ultimate reality.

It is evident now that any kind of objective being will be limited. However comprehensive we may try to make the object, it cannot possibly include

the whole of reality. An object will leave something out. It will have some limitation or other. To say that something is object and to say that it is the whole of reality is a self-contradiction. An object is only reached or achieved through a limitation of the whole. An object is only one among objects. And even if we *could* put together all possible objects in one completed whole, this whole would still exclude the subject. The subject is not one of the objects to be included. It cannot be included in any possible whole. It includes, but is never itself included.

It is often suggested that the whole must be a subject-object whole. The object taken by itself is an abstraction. The object is what it is only in relation to the knowing subject. Similarly, the subject too is an abstraction. A subject that does not know is not subject in any sense. The only concrete reality is the whole constituted by the ultimate subject and the ultimate object. Neither of these elements can be set up into an absolute reality. Each demands the other and is made whole by the other. Together they constitute an ultimate and indissoluble unity.

It appears to us that this idea of the subject and the object together constituting the whole is an erroneous idea. The subject can never be in the

"together"-relation. It is not really related. Instead of saying that the subject *must know*, it is truer to say that the subject which knows becomes thereby limited like an object, and so less than the subject. We speak of it as "that which knows the object A or the object B, etc." It thus becomes a new kind of object. There are philosophers who take this discreteness of the subject as proof of its lack of self-identity, and so proceed to identify it with the passing thought. The real subject however stands outside of any relation to the object. It cannot be included in any whole comprising the object. For such a whole would still be an object of reflective thought. It would imply the subject which stands outside of it and is not included within it. This *ever unincluded* subject has a position which is quite unique with respect to every conceivable whole. While it is essentially unrelated and unrelatable, the whole is only realised in relation to it. This relation, in the circumstances, cannot be a fundamental relation. It is the sort of relation which an imaginary object has to the person imagining it. The person need not imagine. Imagination is not necessary to his being. But the object imagined has no being without the imagination. Thus the real subject includes every possible whole, but is not itself included. It is the super-whole. We conclude that ultimate reality can only be conceived under the category of the pure subject.

There is another reason for this. Ultimate reality must be infinite. The finite may be real. At least every thing which we know is finite. But the reality of the finite is somehow *not in itself*. The finite has some dimension. If it has the space-dimension, it is both limited in space and infinitely divisible in it. If it has the time-dimension, it will have a limited duration and be at the same time infinitely divisible in it. If it has any qualities, that too constitutes a certain dimension. We can suppose that each of its qualities constitutes a series of grades or degrees, and that the thing in question realises certain of these grades and does not realise certain others. In that case, the thing will have a limited grade of that quality, and be at the same time infinitely divisible in that quality. What is evident is that the finite has a dimension; and once it has a dimension, it is infinitely divisible in that dimension.

Finitude is generally associated with spatial and temporal being or with quantity. But it may also be associated exclusively with qualitative being. It may now be argued that what we mean when we say that a certain thing is qualitatively finite is that it has certain qualities and does not have certain others. But a quality is not further divisible. It may be quite complex, but it is always specific.

The object either has it or it does not have it. It appears to us however, that once we say that a quality is specific, we have presupposed several specifications of that quality. If we say that something is red, or bitter or warm, we mean that these terms cover wide variations of these qualities, and that no one thing can possess all of them. If something is warm, it is warm to a particular degree. If something is bitter, it is once again bitter to a degree. Thus there will always be an ascending scale, and the thing will only realise a certain portion of the scale. No quality, it appears to us, is absolute in character so that it cannot cover any variations of the quality. But if that is so, anything that has a quality has a certain dimension, and it is infinitely divisible in that dimension. Thus the finite is not only limited from outside. It is also limited from within. It runs into a series everywhere. It has no individuality, wholeness, or self-completeness. So far as it is limited from outside, it takes us to a greater whole. So far as it is limited from inside, we cannot say, "it is *this*"; it is infinitely divisible in its this-ness.

Let it now be granted that each quality which a thing has is quite ultimate and indivisible. Even so, the thing escapes us. The list of all the qualities of a thing cannot be exhausted. We can per-

haps name some of the qualities which the thing does not have. We cannot find out or enumerate all the qualities which it has. It is arguable that it has infinite qualities. Theoretically, no limit can be set. If that is so, is the finite thing really finite? It appears to us that the finitude of the thing is only a limitation of the infinite which the thing is in reality. The finitude cannot be ultimate. It is intelligible only in reference to the infinite of which it is the limitation. The infinite alone is what truly exists.

We do not know what the thing is in itself. In itself, it may quite well be the infinite. The thing is a particular to us. But all particularity is relative, not absolute or final. We have a description of each thing. There is a description which is as exhaustive as we can make it. It is then a sufficient description of the thing. When this description is so specific that it signifies one and one thing only, we call it an exclusive description. But we never get at *the* thing. Every description of it is in general terms. It progressively limits the thing; but it never finally fixes those limits. The final limit will only be reached, if at all, when the thing is shown to be an absolute particular, or in other words when its place is absolutely fixed in relation to every other particular and so in the whole of

reality. But then the thing as an individual will be abolished. The truth is that the thing has no nature in itself which may be grasped as it is, apart from the relations of the thing to other things. What nature it has is due to these relations and the qualitative limitations super-imposed upon it from outside. The finite thing is not real as finite. If we seek to know it as it is. we must seek to know it as the infinite.

The question now is, what is the nature of the infinite? There is an external view of infinity, according to which the infinite is an infinitely great dimension. We can never reach it, because it is an endless process of adding up finite values. Such an infinite can never possibly have wholeness or completeness. It will be an imaginary infinite, requiring us to imagine greater and greater wholes in a fruitless attempt to get at the end. It is a spurious infinite. The true infinite must be self-complete. But that alone can be self-complete, which is without dimension. We must be able to say of it that it has no external or internal limit. It may well be spoken of as "greater than the greatest and at the same time smaller than the smallest."

No object however can have this character of being free from all limit. It will have some limitation or other. It is the subject alone that can be

free from all limits. For it comprehends them. No-one can comprehend its limits. It is the "great beyond" whose limit no-one has seen or can see. It is not great in "the ever completing"; it is great in "the ever-completed." It alone can answer best our notion of a real infinite.

This brings us to another problem. The object, although it may be known to us directly, is still hidden from our full view. It is some kind of mystery to us. It haunts us with the question, what is it in itself, how is it related to other things, what will be its real nature, etc? There is scope for the study of the object. This study is undertaken by the different empirical sciences. We can also speak of the philosophy of the object or the philosophy of nature. Here we can examine the fundamental presuppositions of the different sciences. There are always certain presuppositions which the sciences make, but which they do not examine or justify. Philosophy may seek to examine their truth, and generally to co-ordinate the different sciences.

Can there be any such thing as philosophy of the subject? The subject is not any kind of object. It does not seem to offer a problem. There is no mystery about it, no truth which we might seek to understand. It is not hidden from our view, nor

partially revealed to us like an object. It does not baffle us, tantalise us. We seem to know the subject wholly and as it is. It is the most immediate thing to us. We start with this self-assurance of the subject and then proceed to examine other things. The subject does not come forward before us, it does not present itself to us, it does not offer a problem. What then can we seek to know of it or study about it? There seems to be no room for a philosophy of the subject.

We admit that the subject cannot be further known. It is ever known. We have no ignorance about it. Every-one has the intuition of "I." Only we confound this "I" with the "not-I." But then, on reflection, we do discriminate between the two. We are never in any uncertainty as to what is "I" and what is "not-I." The only drawback seems to be the inertia of thought which prevents us from reflecting far enough. If we simply tried to carry through the discrimination of the self from the not-self, we should be in no doubt. The self is known to us and completely known to us. It reveals itself to us as it is. There is no room for any knowledge of the self properly speaking. For there is no ignorance of it to begin with. To seek to know it further is not unoften to seek to know it in the wrong way. It is to make an object of that which is not an object.

But while the self cannot be further known, our mis-conceptions about it need to be eliminated. Our actual intuition of it is of one kind, our understanding of it is of another. We *know* the self in one way, and *think* of it in another. Our understanding is full of errors, doubts and mis-conceptions. This understanding must be harmonised with our fundamental intuition.

The philosophy of the self is nothing but a process of refining our intellectual perception of the self. It is in this sense a form of spiritual seeing or deepening of our insight. We do not know anything new or something which we did not know before. The self is quite evident to us. It is not hidden or veiled. But our thought has put it away at a great distance from us. It is in this sense that we may be said to lack the eye for it. We do not attend to it as it is. We have to learn to attend to it or to see it as it is. The fault is of our understanding only. The fault is not of the thing which is ever self-revealed to us.

There is a view according to which there is no single entity which deserves to be called the self. We shall not here enter into an elaborate criticism of that view. But it is an erroneous view. It starts with the supposition that if there is a self, it must be capable of being cognised by us as object. Evidently, introspection reveals no self-identical entity

which deserves to be called the self. Even if it did reveal some entity of the sort, that entity would be an object to us; and about an object we can never have any assurance that it is *really* self-identical, or unchanging through change. Moreover, we naturally reject anything that can be presented as being the same thing as our self. We cannot possibly be misled in this matter. If anything is absolutely clear and self-evident to us, it is the distinction between the self and the not-self. We can never say about the self "*this* is my self". When therefore anybody points to the physical body or fixes upon an organic sensation or upon the passing thought or again upon the empirical ego, and says "*this* is my self", he is evidently wrong. He is identifying himself with the not-self. It is no wonder then that no entity which we can detect through introspection ever does fulfil the meaning of the self as something self-identical and unchanging.

The truth is that there is no need to look for the self. We simply cannot deny it. It is the denier of the denial. What is needed is not to prove the reality of the self. For while we can never prove this reality, there is also no need to prove it. The self is the presupposition of every proof. A proof is a proof *to the self.* It is the self that approves or ascertains. Self-certainty is thus the only absolute

certainty. It is the ground of all other certainties. We conclude that it is wrong to look for the self as some kind of enduring mental entity which is to be known through introspection, or to deny it because we can find no such entity.

Self-awareness is a common fact of experience. Even those who explain away the self have to admit it. There are differences only in the analysis of this fact. We contend that these differences are ultimately due to the sorts of entities that are found in close unity or identity with the self. We confound the self with these entities. Thus there are levels of subjectivity or of conscious self-awareness as there are levels in the sorts of entities that we confound with the self. Some of these entities are difficult to disentangle, because they are so much "after the image of the self." And yet we must carry this process of disentanglement to the end in order to get at the pure, immutable and eternally resplendent self.

CHAPTER VIII

Self-awareness

WE said that the fact of self-awareness cannot be denied. Every-one is aware of his own self and is never in doubt that he himself exists. What now is the nature of this self-awareness?

It will be generally admitted that the self of which any-one is aware is a functioning self. It is the self as subject, or the self which knows, feels, etc. A self which has no function, which stands still, and which is not related to objects of some sort, is not a self of which any-one can be aware. But what exactly is our knowledge of this self?

There is a view according to which the self which we know in this way is not a real substance. It does not exist in itself. It is the self as related to the object. It is what it is only in this relation. It is an empirical entity. It is known like any other object. It is not some kind of non-objective entity which may be said to exist in itself and apart from all relations.

Shall we say that this is the only self that there is, and that we cannot go beyond the empirical ego? But that would not be true. If the empirical ego is known, there is still the knower of the ego. This knower is not known. As a matter of fact, the subject of any piece of knowledge is never known. The subject is not its own object. It is also not the object of some other subject. It is no object at all. When I know A, A is my object, not myself. When I know myself as that which knows A, I have no doubt objectified myself; but for that very reason I must make a distinction between this object-self and my real self which is no object but which knows the self as object. If anything is absolutely clear to us, it is the distinction of the object and the subject. The object cannot be the subject, and *vice-versa.* If then the real self is indicated by the subject, this self is never known. It must be distinguished from the empirical ego which is known. Thus the subject-self cannot be denied, although it is not known and is not knowable. It is implied by every known object, including the empirical ego.

It might be thought that our argument is merely verbal. We have introduced knowledge of the self as subject through the back-door. For if the subject-self is not known, how do we ever speak of it? Is it not truer to say that the subject is known as it

functions? It knows itself and the object at the same time. While it reveals the object, it is also self-revealing. We have the analogy of light for this.

Now we do not deny that we know the subject-self in some sense. But that is a sense which needs to be clearly grasped. What we do emphatically deny is that we know the subject in the objective attitude. The subject is not further known; and if we speak of it as known, it has ceased to be the subject. The analogy of light is not helpful. Light is material. It does not know itself or anything beside itself. It needs an intelligent self to know it. The light which is the self is not any material light. It is, accordingly, incapable of being known by something else or even by itself. It is the light of all lights. All other lights, such as the sun and the moon, the senses and the speech, function by it and derive their revelatory character from it. How can any other light reveal the self?

It may now be said that although the self is not known in the ordinary sense, it is known in some other sense. We do not indeed know it in the objective attitude. We do not contemplate the self. We enjoy the self. We know the self enjoyingly; or what is the same thing, we know the self in a pure subjective experience. We cannot deny

this experience, although we cannot reduce it to a subject-object form. In one and the same experience, we contemplate the object, and we enjoy the self. It is wrong to say that we do not know the subject, or that we know it as object, or again that we know it as something in itself involving no relation to the object. It is only as the subject knows that it is known. But at the same time, it is known in a way different from that in which the object is known.

The self is known enjoyingly. What is this enjoying experience? It is evident that it must be some form of feeling experience. In a feeling, the subject and the object are not distinguishable. They form a unity. We cannot for instance distinguish a head-ache from the feeling of it. The head-ache is not something that falls outside the feeling and is merely "given" to feeling. The head-ache is the feeling itself. It is nothing apart from the feeling. Now it would no doubt be true to say that the subject-self is not "given", just as the felt object is not given. It is not the object of a further knowing. But at the same time it would be wrong to say that we have any feeling of it.

It is certain that we have no feeling of pleasure or pain with regard to the self. The self is not felt to be enjoyable or otherwise. These two forms of

feeling are recognised by all. It is difficult to see what other form feeling can have. Let us however suppose that there can be a neutral feeling, and that the self is felt to be neutral as between pleasure and pain. But evidently, this feeling, if we have any, will not prove the *being* of the self. The self itself is not felt. No entity that exists is ever felt to exist, except in the sense that the knowledge of it has not become explicit yet. An existent entity is known, not felt. We cannot posit something to *be* unless we can contemplate that something, unless we can make it our *object*. It would be wrong to throw the burden of knowledge upon feeling, or to seek to solve the problems arising from knowledge by having resort to feeling. It is quite evident to us that we have no feeling of the self, and that to say that we know the self enjoyingly is to make a confusion between the proper spheres of knowledge and of feeling.

How then is the self known? We contend that it is not strictly known. The knowing self is never known. But are we ignorant of it? Shall we treat the self as something that is real, but which is for ever unknowable? This conclusion too is unwarranted. We have no ignorance of the self. We have, in an important sense, perfect knowledge. We can have ignorance only about something which can be

known objectively. The subject-self is never capable of being thus known. Indeed, we may treat the self as knowable and create an artificial ignorance about it. We often say, "I do not know my true self." This very attitude to the self, on our part, makes of it an object to be known. But then all objective knowledge about the self, capable of dissipating this ignorance, will itself require, in the end, to be cancelled or transcended. There is no knowledge *appropriate* to the self except to *be* the self. And no-one can assert that he is at any time *not his self.* The fact that we always assert our own existence and never deny it, is the only positive evidence of self-knowledge. All that we can ever do, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of the self, is to eliminate and root out from this knowledge, all false conceptions that we entertain.

The self we said is real; and further, that we have no ignorance about it. Does this not amount to saying that it is in some sense known? Let us suppose that this is so. We now contend that the self is not known in the ordinary way. It is self-known. By this we do not mean that the self can objectify itself, or that the same self can be both subject and object at the same time. We have already seen that this is impossible. What we understand by self-knowledge here is that between the

self and the so-called knowledge of the self no distinction can be made. The self is not one thing and the knowledge of it another. The self is the knowledge. In other words, knowledge of the self or self-knowledge is not to be understood literally. The whole can be equated with either of the terms. It is like the "head of Rahu". Rahu is nothing but the head. The possessive preposition "of" merely indicates equivalence. Similarly, the self is nothing but the knowledge. It is in this sense that the self may be said to be known. It is not known as object. Or what comes to the same thing, the self is pure knowledge or pure intelligence. It is not the object of any knowledge, and it can never be reflected upon.

Self-knowledge in the above sense alone realises the ideal of knowledge. Reality and the knowledge of reality do not fall apart. This ideal is not something to be realised. It is, in an important sense, ever realised; for it is the ground and the presupposition of all other knowledge. We cannot know anything whatsoever without first knowing ourselves. Self-knowledge precedes the knowledge of objects. The latter is significant only in the removal of a particular ignorance. The former is significant by itself or as pure effulgence. The ignorance of things must belong to the self. It is the self that is ignor-

ant, and it is the self that knows. Thus the prior reality of the self is a condition of any knowledge arising. But this self itself is not in its turn known. There being no prior ignorance of it, there is also no knowledge of it arising. The self is never known in any specific act. It is the presupposition of every act. It is more appropriately conceived as a pure revelation. We call it a pure revelation because there is no break in it. It reveals everything impartially and uninterruptedly. It reveals both ignorance and knowledge. But there is nothing else to reveal it. It is self-revealed.

Truly speaking, the self does not reveal; for it does not enter into any dualistic relation. It is the revelation pure and simple. The self is only metaphorically spoken of as revealing things; for even while it is said to reveal, it does not "take note." "Taking note" implies self-distinction. And any possible self-distinction and self-limitation needs itself to be revealed. The self must therefore remain a pure light. It must not take note. It must not enter into a dualistic relation. That would reduce it to an object of a sort. It must remain pure and aloof, a transcendental awareness *par excellence*. It is certainly no kind of object. But being unrelated, it would also be incorrect to call it subject. It is beyond both subject and object, the infinite Self.

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It might now be said that we have unduly extended the meaning of the facts of our experience and taken up an extreme position which is unjustified. We started with the notion that the self is the subject. Have we any reason for going back on it or going beyond it? It is evident that we cannot speak of a self which is not a subject, and which does nothing and knows nothing. At whatever stage we take it, it is in relation to some object. And because it is related, it can be known. It cannot possibly be wholly non-empirical. We know a certain object, say a table. The subject that knows the table is related to the table; and being related, it is a finite subject. We can reflect upon it. We can know it as "the subject knowing the table." It is in principle empirical in character. We can indeed go beyond this subject and maintain that the true subject is not the subject which is here known, but the reflecting subject. But is the reflecting subject absolute in character? Is it not in its turn related? Evidently, reflection implies a content reflected upon. The new subject is not different in principle. We may carry this procedure further and further; but we shall never get at a subject which is a pure subject, which is unrelated, and which is not capable of being grasped as an empirical content.

This argument overlooks the fact that the subject

which we discover in this way and about which we can speak is not the *true* subject. The true subject remains ever in the back-ground. It cannot be discovered and it cannot be known. It cannot even be conceived as related. For it is the *ground* of the relations, and is therefore itself unrelated. Again, the dualism of the subject and the object is known. How could it be known, if the knowing of it did not imply a consciousness which was not a term of the dualism? Thus the knowledge of the dualism indicates the pure subject which is never related and which is never an object.

It might be contended that this is going too far. We can conceive a series of terms in which each term is subject and object alternately. We can in this way explain the possibility of knowledge at each stage. What is subject at one moment is object at the next. We can therefore claim that the subject is in principle knowable. The series is no doubt unending. But we need not carry it on indefinitely. We can stop wherever we like. The last term in that case will be a subject which is not in its turn an object.

This argument appears to us to be fallacious. The same term cannot be both subject and object either simultaneously or successively. It is evident that no term is subject and object at the same time. Can

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which we discover in this way and about which we can speak is not the *true* subject. The true subject remains ever in the back-ground. It cannot be discovered and it cannot be known. It cannot even be conceived as related. For it is the *ground* of the relations, and is therefore itself unrelated. Again, the dualism of the subject and the object is known. How could it be known, if the knowing of it did not imply a consciousness which was not a term of the dualism? Thus the knowledge of the dualism indicates the pure subject which is never related and which is never an object.

It might be contended that this is going too far. We can conceive a series of terms in which each term is subject and object alternately. We can in this way explain the possibility of knowledge at each stage. What is subject at one moment is object at the next. We can therefore claim that the subject is in principle knowable. The series is no doubt unending. But we need not carry it on indefinitely. We can stop wherever we like. The last term in that case will be a subject which is not in its turn an object.

This argument appears to us to be fallacious. The same term cannot be both subject and object either simultaneously or successively. It is evident that no term is subject and object at the same time. Can

it have these incompatible characters successively? It is argued in this connection that these characters are not inherent in things themselves. Things themselves are neither subject nor object. They gain these characters according to the relations in which they stand to other things, and the functions which they perform. The same thing can thus be subject in respect of one particular entity and object in respect of another. It is possible to conceive that the same thing has both these characters simultaneously in respect of different entities. And there is still less difficulty in conceiving that it has them successively. In the latter case, it will be subject first and object later on. There is no incompatibility in this.

This view is not acceptable to us for the following reasons: (1) We can form no idea of entities that are really neutral. In order to assert the being of anything, it is relevant to ask for evidence. And all evidence can only prove either a subject or an object. If an entity is knowable, it is an object. But if it is not knowable, and yet it cannot be denied, then it is a self-evidencing subject. There is no middle course. All entities must fall either under the one or under the other class. If there is anything which is neither subject nor object, it cannot be proved to be anything at all. It is as good as

nothing.

(2) The idea that a neutral entity can stand in the relation of the subject or in the relation of the object to some other entity is untenable. It is not within the competence of any entity to stand in any relation that it likes, to some other entity. It can only stand in those relations for which its own essential nature is suited. The distinction of the intelligent and the unintelligent or matter and spirit runs through all reality. Things which appear in our experience as unintelligent can by no stretch of our imagination assume the rôle of subjects and begin to know. Indeed, we may greatly simplify matters by assuming that there is nothing in all reality which is essentially unintelligent, and that everything that is, can function intelligently. In other words, spirit is the only reality. But then how can anything he left over to assume the rôle of the object? It is certain that what is essentially intelligent can never present itself to our sense-awareness as something in physical space and time. And what *does* present itself to us in this way may be a vehicle of intelligence, it may be the body through which the intelligence functions, but it can never be itself intelligent. No metaphysical entity can assume the rôle of the subject or the rôle of the object at its own option.

(3) Lastly, what determines an entity to have a

particular relation to some other entity at a particular time? Evidently, according to the present view, there is nothing in the nature of the neutral entity itself, to make it function as subject or as object. What is it then that determines the function? It appears to us that an essentially spiritual or intelligent relation cannot be explained through the *mechanical action* of one thing upon another, or through any *causal process*. Intelligence cannot be produced. Something must *be* intelligent to begin with before it can function intelligently in a particular situation. But then we shall have already granted the reality of the intelligent subject. We cannot proceed from neutral entities and explain the possibility of subjective function.

We conclude that the same term cannot be subject and object either simultaneously or successively. If then we have a series of terms only, that series is either an unending series in which each term, as far as we can carry the series, is an object and no term is a subject; or we have a limited series, in which the last term is a subject which is never an object. In the former case, knowledge of the series is not possible, and the series can never be realised as a series. In the latter case, there is no term of the series which is both subject and object. The last term which is the subject is not a member of the

series at all; for it is never known as part of it. The hypothesis of a series of terms in which each term is subject and object alternately is untenable.

The true subject, we said, is not related. But granting that it is related to the object, what is the nature of this relation? It is evident that the subject is not passively related. It is active. It is through the function of the subject that the object comes to be object. The object is not *object in itself.* It is constituted an object by the subject which presents it to itself or knows it. Thus the object is necessarily related to the subject. It is nothing apart from the relation. But there is no similar necessity in respect of the subject. The subject need not be related. *The subject is nothing if it is not a free subject.* It is only such a subject that can know. Knowledge is not essential to its being. It has being in itself.

We have an instance of this freedom of the subject in imagination. It will be admitted that what is imagined is dependent entirely upon the imagination of it. But this cannot be said about the imagining subject. It is not in any way dependent. It may imagine or it may not imagine. It is in any case free. If we conceive the imagining subject as *necessarily related,* it has ceased to be the subject it was; it has become itself "constituted" through a

higher grade of the subject. The real subject is never defined by its relation to the object. It is essentially unrelated and free.

Our conclusion is that the true subject is the transcendental subject. It is the very literal truth that we are always in a situation in which we do not know our self while we do, and can, know everything else beside it. We do and can relate other things, but we ourselves in our essential nature, stand unrelated. We are always in a situation in which we are, metaphysically speaking, *all alone.* This is the ultimate truth. But we have fallen into the error of thinking that our self is the correlate of the world, and that if we ceased to be related to the world we should cease to be ourselves. We need to realise that even while we find ourselves in the world and related to it, we are not really related. We are not *of* the world. We encompass the world. The world does not limit us. "It is limited" through us. We know every limitation, give meaning to it, and transcend it. There is nothing that can limit us, nothing that is greater than the Self.

CHAPTER IX

Grades Of Subjectivity

WE have so far seen that the object-self is not the only self. The object-self is to be distinguished from the true self which is never an object. But although we may be obliged to recognise this fact through an analysis of our experience, we cannot claim that we have, subjectively speaking, the same amount of assurance as to the reality of this self as we have for instance with respect to sensible objects. Can this situation be remedied? Can we have clear and certain knowledge about the self as we no doubt seem to have about physical things? This is our next question.

It appears to us that the sort of intuition which will clear up all our doubts in this matter is a difficult thing. We are habituated to look outward. Even when we want to look inward, the same habit of mind asserts itself. We want to see the self as we are accustomed to see mental objects. But the

self cannot be thus seen. We must reverse the process. We must drop all efforts to see the self as object. Instead of ourselves mentally approaching the self in order to see what it is, we must let the self approach us, declare itself to us. It is an effort which is the very opposite of the effort of imagination or the effort of construction. We merely let reality speak for itself; and we help this self-revelation of reality by putting right our understanding and eliminating all misconceptions about the nature of the self. We thinkingly reject all false notions.

This process of thought is not merely negative. It has a positive aspect. If the self is *not this*, *not that*,—the question remains, what is it then? Negation must therefore be an integral part of a positive understanding. This is facilitated, because we are not dealing with an unknown entity. The self is the most immediate of all things. It is in a way self-evident to every-one. So much is this the case, that its distinction from the not-self is compared to the distinction of light from darkness. No-body can ever mistake light for its opposite, namely darkness. Light declares itself to every-one for what it is, except to the person who would not see. Starting with this self-evident notion, the process of negation becomes meaningful. It is no longer mere and pure negation leading nowhere. Negation becomes a

means to a more definite and clearer understanding. It helps to achieve the final goal of knowledge.

If what we have said is right, it is wrong to suppose that the goal of knowledge is realised, if at all, all at once. There is a sense in which we have knowledge of the absolute Self at the very start. Without this knowledge, no amount of discriminative thought would bring the goal nearer to us. We start with knowledge. This knowledge is merely purified, stabilised, and deepened by the later processes of thought. The end is only reached when we have knowledge which leaves no room for doubt in our mind and gives us complete and absolute assurance. This end then is only gradually attained. It is not attained all at once at a single glorious moment so that a wholly worldly man is immediately changed into the very absolute God. The saving knowledge, like sainthood in another connection, is a matter of gradual attainment. The whole process may be compared to the process of driving a nail into the ground. Having started with a certain initial position of the nail in the ground, the process is carried forward. We give a stroke; and then we loosen the nail from the ground in order to make the next stroke more effective. Every stroke is thus followed by a loosening, till we have given a stroke which does not need to be repeated; or if it

is repeated, it does not materially affect the position of the nail. The nail has attained its firmest position in the ground. This is how the process of thinking may be said to go forward and attain the full maturation of knowledge.

Another point to note in this connection is that this knowledge has a wholly human character. It may be all very well to say that to *know* the Absolute is to *be* the Absolute, and then to deduce from this the further conclusion that this knowledge only comes when we have dropped, once and for all, our humanity and become the Absolute. Evidently, such knowledge cannot have degrees. It cannot even be a matter of our human understanding. Our human understanding has normally a certain shadow of thought. There can be more and less of assurance in it on any subject. We can reach a degree of assurance which is as good as complete and free from doubt. The upper limit is reached when thought is at a stand-still; it does not move, and it does not therefore create any uncertainty or distress in the mind. But this is still a human state. It is certitude as humanly possible. If this human understanding is to be completely transcended, we can have, properly speaking, no opening for any kind of knowledge. We may no doubt say that the ultimate knowledge is an ineffable intuition beyond thought

or beyond understanding. But the ineffable intuition, if it is intuition in the only sense in which we can understand it, cannot be a non-mental affair. All that we can mean is that the perception is so clear and certain that thought has no further scope. The perception is determined by the reality itself, and does not itself determine the reality. Apart from this human intuition, there is no other intuition which will remove *our ignorance* about the Absolute.

The Absolute itself is eternally realised. It has no need of further realisation through knowledge. This need exists for us only. But how can we realise the Absolute or know it? Can the limited know the unlimited? We contend that we are unlimited; our limitation is due to thought; and it can also be removed in thought. After all, our thought is the only means of knowledge. Whatever we want to know, from the tiniest thing to the Absolute, we can only know through thought. We can only approach it with our understanding. We cannot wholly trancend thought. But at the same time, thought must conform to the nature of the real. If it recognises a real which is unlimited, it cannot understand it as limited. It must assume the form of the reality which it recognises. It is only in this way, through the identity of thought with reality, that we can have absolute certainty in

knowledge. But this culmination of knowledge is still an essentially human affair; it is an affair of thought or understanding.

We all have an intuition of the self; and we may all employ the same reasoning. But this is not enough. We cannot all equally attain the goal of knowledge. There is no inevitability about it. There is an unascertainable element which defeats analysis. We have to admit that in the end this knowledge is a spontaneous affair. It comes from within. It cannot be coerced. What can be coerced is the logical process that is a necessary means to it. But this is not the whole thing. Philosophy here gives place to religion. Reason has a necessary function. But its scope is limited. Beyond reason is spiritual sight, which cannot be commanded. He alone sees who sees.

The business of philosophy is to analyse our experience as it is, and to try to get at a right understanding of the self. This we shall attempt now. The true self, we have said, is the ultimate subject. We all have an intuition of the subject. But reflection reveals that our notion of the subject is not simple. There are many elements in it which are not properly of the subject. It is essential then, in order to render our perception of the subject clear

and unconfused, to pick out these elements and dissociate them from the subject.

We find ourselves in sensible and practical relation to a world outside. The term "I" used in this relation does not stand for some purely spiritual entity. It means the embodied self or the self with the body. It is this self alone that can act or be acted upon. But evidently the self with the body is not the same thing as the body. The self is something over and above the body. If the body were the whole thing, we should not speak of the self at all. We should only speak of the activities of the body or the behaviour of the body. There would be no entity that could be distinguished from the body and that could deserve to be called "I". The term "I" would really become meaningless; so also the expression "my body", etc.

There is a view according to which the self is indeed to be distinguished from the body and the modifications of the body, but it is never found apart from the body. It is the *entelechy* of the body or the presiding intelligence of the body. If the body comes to an end as a living organism, so must the intelligence. There is no evidence that there is any disembodied spirit or disembodied soul. The soul in the body is all that can be proved to be real. The question of the survival of the soul should not even

arise. The soul is not a separate entity which may be said to be in the body just as an article may be said to be inside a box. The soul is not matter, or any kind of stuff.'

This view, although protesting against the materiality of the soul, is really a worse form of materialism. It reduces the soul to a bye-product of the physical organism. It is admitted that matter can exist in itself. Tables and chairs do not need an entelechy. They are not associated with an intelligence. Only the living organism is so associated. But every such organism loses its entelechy at what we call death and lapses into mere matter. Thus matter indeed survives. There is no death of matter. The entelechy alone is lost. We concede self-existence to matter, and deny it to the spirit. The latter accordingly cannot be as real as the physical organism. It becomes no more than a bye-product of the latter. This is also evident from some of the expressions used in this connection. It is said, for example, that "the body grows its soul". † The implication is clear.

It may not be the very literal truth to say that the soul is in the body and that it leaves the body at the time of death. But it is truer to say this

† I believe that the expression is used by Prof. Stout.

than to say that the soul is nothing in itself that can survive the body. The distinction of the soul from the body is essential. In order to arrive at this distinction, we must not think of the soul in the abstract as some kind of entity which we do not know and perhaps cannot know. The soul is the same thing as the self; and the self is indicated by the intuition of "I". This intuition is diametrically opposed to the intuition of the body. The body is indicated by the intuition of "this". What is absolutely certain is that I am not the same thing as "this". It would be quite wrong to say 'I am this', meaning the body; and no-one who thinks or who means what he says would say it. The body is related to me in some way, but it is quite distinct from me. It is an instrument of my knowledge and behaviour, but it is not myself. I, quite evidently, reject the body as being myself.

We may eliminate the reference to the outside world in our knowledge of the self. We may try to know the self directly. But it does not appear that it is something purely spiritual. The organic bodily sensations seem to be the basis of self-consciousness. If we eliminate these, we seem to have taken away the very matter which enters into our consciousness of self. The indefinite mass of organic sensations which constitutes our body-feeling is the back-ground

of all our conscious activities in the body. Whether we see or think, whether we will or simply sit quiet, this body-feeling is there and we easily confound it with the "I" or the self. But even here it will be recognised that the body-feeling is *to me*. The "I" having the feeling is not itself this feeling. The "I" cannot be equated with the felt body. Indeed, the disembodied self cannot feel. It is only the embodied that has any feeling. But at the same time, there is no sense in speaking of a body-feeling except to a self which is not identical with the feeling and which distinguishes the feeling from itself. The body-feeling needs to be eliminated from our perception of the self.

The next stage is reached when we confuse the self with the mental events. It is argued that the expressions "I see", "I think", "I remember" etc., are simply metaphorical. When I say "I see", the truth is that there is a certain visual sensation. There is no such thing as "I", which sees. When I think, there is a thought; there is no such thing as a thinker of the thought. All these so-called spiritual entities are neutral entities. They are non-personal in character. The personal form imposed upon them merely expresses their membership of a certain whole. The entities in question naturally constitute distinct wholes. It is in virtue of this

that my thoughts and feelings are mine, and your thoughts and feelings are yours. "You" and "I" stand for two different wholes. The term "I" merely expresses one particular unity or wholeness. If we tried to go deeply into the nature of this unity, we should find that the unity is constituted either by the common relation which all these neutral mental entities have to one and the same body, or a certain relation which holds between the entities themselves. "I" or the self then is not *an entity.* It is the name of a certain non-personal relation.

This view is no more tenable than those which we have rejected before, and that for the same reason. The passing sensation or the passing thought is known. It is claimed to be *mine,* not myself. There is an awareness which goes beyond it and makes it its object. The reality of my self is to be sought in this awareness which is not itself mental but which reveals every state that is mental. As to the suggestion that it is the name of a certain non-personal relation, that too must be rejected. A non-personal relation cannot explain or account for the personal form. The personal form is *sui generis.* A non-personal relation is after all what is discovered or known by the person who is supposed to be constituted by it. If it were the same thing as the self, how could it be known? But since it is known, it

must certainly be distinct. Further, what defines *you* and *me*? If it is a certain non-personal relation, it would indifferently define either you or me. It cannot define both. What can perhaps define "I" will be a relation between *my* states or a relation of *my* states to *my* body; and what can define "you" will be a relation between *your* states or a relation of *your* states to *your* body. But then this is begging the question. We explain the difference of "I" and "you" only as we already take it for granted. The relation does not explain the difference. Rather the difference in the relation is itself explained by taking the notions of "I" and "you" as self-evident and as not further explicable.

It may here be argued that we do not need an extra-mental entity or an extra-mental consciousness in order to explain our knowledge of mental states. This knowledge can be explained by saying that the succeeding state is the awareness of the preceding state. Indeed the two states are not simultaneous. But it is conceivable that the earlier state finishes off by being incorporated in the later state, to which it gives rise, and which it determines. Or what is the same thing, the earlier state causes or produces the later state by being *pictured* in that state. Each state in the series of mental states is thus subject and object in turn. It begins by

being subject and it ends by being object. These terms are relative only. What a particular term is in a series depends upon its position in it and its relation to other terms. It will be subject in respect of what goes before it, and object in respect of what comes after it. These epithets are not exclusive; although they would be so, if they were used as attributes of one and the same thing without any qualification †.

It appears to us that two radically different and incompatible ideas are here put together in order to evolve a novel idea. We can be said to understand in a way a natural process, in which one thing simply becomes another. The first thing is changed, modified, or even as we say destroyed, in order to give rise to that which follows it. We believe that there is a certain continuity between the terms. It is a natural continuity, whatever we may mean by this expression. Most likely it is the continuity of some ultimate stuff of matter, if that is conceivable. If there is no such stuff and we are reduced to a flux of pure events, the continuity can only be found in the causal conception or the mode in which we conceive one event as giving rise to another. What is

† I believe that this view would come very near to the view of Prof: Whitehead on the subject.

certain is that in a natural process the earlier event is replaced by the later.

The limitation of this conception is that there is lack of intelligibility in the causal process. A gives rise to B without continuing in any form in B. But how can the ceasing to be of A give rise to B, when B has no link with A? The only way in which continuity can be saved on the basis of events is when the earlier event is not lost, but is caught up in the later; when it is incorporated in the later, and thereby determines the later. This is possible when it is pictured by the later, or when it is felt by the later. The earlier event causes the later by being felt by the later. A spiritual relation of subject and object alone thus seems to save the meaning of causality.

Let us suppose that the process of reality is a spiritual process in the above sense. The terms of this process are not crudely material, and they do not fall outside each other. The earlier falls within the next succeeding, and so on. Again, this "falling inside another" is not to be understood in a mechanical way. It is to be understood on the analogy of the subject-object relation. The earlier is felt by the later.

The question now is, can the spiritual process be likened to a natural process, or can the law of

causality in any form apply to it? It appears to us that this is not possible. Every event, in the moment of its actuality, is a subject-event. It is argued that when this event has attained its own unity of feeling, it is precipitated into an object to be felt. But how is the transition to be understood? A subject-event may be conceived, to begin with, as an object of a sort. For, it is claimed that it is definable by its content. It has no character apart from what is felt or perceived in it. The pure subject is a fiction. It is arguable that every percipient event is in this sense known. But it is one thing to say that every percipient event has this character, and another thing to say that a percipient event is *changed into* an object to be perceived. A percipient event can be nothing but a percipient event. It cannot change into anything else. There is no conceivable form of change by which spirit may be supposed to change into matter, or subject into object. The only form of change that is at all intelligible to us is the change from one form of material being to another form. Spirit is something *sui generis*. It is incapable of change.

It has been argued that a subject-event is not after all without its own peculiar subjective character. It is a specific mode of feeling. It is therefore already an object of a sort, and so capable of change.

It is not anything like pure spirit which cannot be other than what it is. It appears to us that this view is fallacious. A specific mode of feeling is an object; and an object cannot be expected to discharge the function of the subject. It is essential to the notion of the subject that all *modes* should be dropped from it. The mode is found only in the object felt or apprehended. There are no modes in the subject. The subject is pure apprehension or pure awareness, or it is no subject at all. The *mode* of apprehension is a mental affair. There is awareness *of* it. It should not be confounded with the subject as such. The latter is beyond the mind and the modes of the mind. It illumines these and reveals them. It is a pure illumination. This is the only true subject; and it cannot possibly change into an object.

It appears to us that a spiritual relation is not like a natural relation. I may know a thing, and then I may cease to know. But my knowing cannot become different from itself. It is either there, or it is not there. It can never change its character as knowing. Our conclusion is that the causal process is a natural process. The spiritual process or the process of prehension is a non-natural process. The two processes are quite distinct and ought not to be confounded with each other. The spiritual process requires the distinction of the subject and the object

as something quite ultimate. The subject is not caused to exist and does not arise. It is presupposed by every prehended entity. It is not a transient term of a series in which each term is subject and object successively. If we conceive a series of mental events, we shall find that the real subject lies outside the series. It is through the identification with that subject that any single member of the series can even appear to discharge the function of the subject.

It will now be said that the "I" after all means something to us. It can only mean some entity which occurs in our experience. This entity can be no other than the thinking and the feeling subject. It is evident however that this entity is not the ultimate term in our consciousness of the self. We are said to be conscious of it. It is properly speaking the empirical subject. The true subject is beyond it. It is what may be said to know, but is never itself known.

The functioning subject is not the ultimate subject. It ceases to know or to function in any way in states like deep sleep where there is no awareness of any object. The subject together with the objects lapses. But has the intelligent self, on that account, ceased to be? Evidently not. For this condition of deep sleep, to-gether with the absence of all intelligent activity of the subject in it, is

known. We wake up and declare that we knew nothing in deep sleep, and that the subject of waking life was itself absent. This knowledge cannot be accounted for unless we admit that there continues to exist in sleep a non-empirical awareness which reveals the very absence of the functioning ego. This awareness then is beyond the ego. It is our truer self, for it reveals the ego while it is and reveals its absence when it is not.

This ego which functions in waking life is intelligent. But it is not intelligent in its own right. What is intelligent in its own right will never become the object of some other intelligence. The ego is intelligent only in so far as it is in the relation of identity with that self which is essentially intelligent and which therefore never lapses from its intelligent character. It is like the unity of the iron-ball and the fire by which it is permeated. The red-hot ball serves every purpose of the fire, but its quality to burn is borrowed from the fire,—it is not inherent in it. The ego functions only when it is in this relation of identity. But when this relation is terminated, the ego lapses; it functions no longer. The true self is beyond the ego. It is called the *Sākshi*, or the evidencing consciousness, in Hindoo philosophy.

The body, the mental events, and the ego,—all

enter into our consciousness of the self. The self is known only as it is identified with one or other or all of these elements of the not-self. We have no consciousness, to begin with, of a pure or transcendental self which is not identified with any of the above elements. That self is not to be known. There can be no consciousness *of* it. It can only be realised in an intuition which realises the unity of knowledge and being. There is no dualism about this intuition. It is the goal. The self which we at present know or can know is the self as identified or mixed up with the elements of the object. This identification is the source of all our error, and the consequent unhappiness. It must be ended. And it can only be ended, when we dissociate from our intuition of the self all those elements which belong to the not-self. Nothing will then remain *to be intuited.* The self will be seen to be the very same thing as pure intuition or pure intelligence. There will be no distinction between being and knowledge.

CHAPTER X

States Of Consciousness

IT is commonly supposed that our empirical consciousness is the only real consciousness, and that the data of waking life are the only data relevant for philosophy. This view is based upon the idea that reality is objective, and that the only means of studying this reality is thought. Accordingly, in science, we frame hypotheses capable of explaining the course of events; and in philosophy, we evolve certain ideas that render intelligible the general nature of reality. But we have seen that ultimate reality cannot be objective in character. It must have the character of the subject, whatever else it might be. We must therefore take note of all the facts that are relevant to an understanding of the ultimate subject. These facts naturally comprise states of consciousness. They are essentially subjective, and have a direct bearing upon the nature of the self.

It is evident that our experience is not limited to waking life. In wakefulness, the self is in relation to an objective world. We are then said to know things outside of us. We deal with "proofs". We seek evidence, and we are also able to assess that evidence. This contact with the physical world provides us with an important philosophical problem: What is the nature of our relationship to the world, and the ultimate validity of the proofs? The physical world is the only sphere of reality which is a standing challenge to the exclusive reality of the spirit; and we decide here the metaphysical status of that world. But the self is not defined by its relation to the physical objects of waking life. The relation lapses, but the self does not lapse. Sense-contact lapses, reason lapses, the self-conscious ego lapses, but the intelligent and conscious self in some sense persists. We may be dreaming. We are then in another world, which is quite real while it lasts. We may even enter a state of deep sleep, where there is no world of any kind. We naturally pass from one state into another as long as life lasts. And we cannot stop with the above three states; for beyond those states, there is death. A new problem thus arises: Does the self exist in all those states? If it does, how is it related to them, and what is its own true nature?

It may be argued that it is unnecessary to go beyond the facts of waking consciousness. This consciousness constitutes a certain unified whole. We remember things which we have seen and learnt before, and we make these the basis of our present and future conduct. We are conscious of the identity and the continuity of our self through all those experiences. Our dream-experiences on the other hand do not constitute a coherent system with the experiences of our waking life. They are mental aberrations. They fall outside the unity of our mental life So far again as the state of deep slumber is concerned, it has no content whatsoever. There is no experience of any kind. Thus our intelligent and rational life is confined to the waking period only. We need not go beyond the facts of this life. Dreams are mere hallucinations, and deep sleep is mere emptiness.

Now it is true that our waking experience constitutes in a way the most important part of our life as a whole. It is while we are awake that we can reason about things and determine truth. Still the mere fact that we have dreams has an important bearing upon any interpretation of experience taken as a whole. Dream-experiences may be hallucinations. But they are not so to the self that dreams. That self takes those experiences to be quite real.

They constitute, with all their incoherence and their fantasticism, a world quite as real to the dreaming self as is the world of waking life to the waking self. They suggest, as nothing else could, that no awareness of objects can be relied upon to give us *the reality*. After all any such awareness will constitute a particular state of the self. And one state can falsify the deliverances of another state. Dreams certainly have metaphysical significance. It may be stated thus. "Appearance of the object does not signify its reality." Similarly, about the state of deep sleep. If it can be proved that the intelligent self continues to exist in this state while it knows no object, we have new light thrown upon the nature of the relation between the subject and the object. The subject ceases to be understood in relation to the object. It has a being which is independent of its relation to the object. The metaphysical significance of this state may be stated thus: "Non-appearance of the object does not signify non-being of the subject."

The fact of the states is particularly important for the elucidation of the nature of the self. The states are states of the self. The question naturally arises, what self? Is it one and the same Self which has these states, or are there different selfs? The latter alternative is clearly untenable. If there were

different selfs corresponding to the states, neither of them could claim to have all the three states. But then, this would be opposed to our common experience; for one and the same self declares that he dreamt, that he slept soundly, and that he woke up. It is the self that sleeps that alone can be said to wake up. The states are the states of a single entity. The question is, what is this entity?

It may be said that the self that functions in waking life is the self that has the other states. It undergoes different experiences. It is thus able to speak of them. It speaks of having dreamt or having slept soundly. It could not do this, if it did not have those experiences. We conclude that the self that is awake and that speaks of the other states, has those states as part of its total experience.

This argument is not convincing. It does not do justice to facts. The waking ego may speak of the other two states. But it cannot have any direct experience of them. When it is present, the other two states are not available. But when they are available, it has ceased to be itself; there is no waking ego. It is quite evident that as we pass from one state into another, there is a change that comes upon us. We are affected in our conscious self-hood. We seem to lose ourselves. Accordingly, when we return to wakefulness, there is a sense of

awakening. We have regained our self. We are quite sure that our present living and thinking ego was not present in the other two states.

It may here be contended that there is no fundamental discontinuity between the states, and that the same consciousness runs through all the states. It is quite artificial, for example, to set up a state of deep sleep in which there is no consciousness of any kind. The truth seems to be that there is no complete unconsciousness at any time, and that all that happens in the state of deep sleep is that our conscious activities are reduced to a minimum and to a pale shadow of themselves. There is therefore no memory of them when we wake up and we begin to think that there was no consciousness at all.

This argument, it appears to us, is not tenable. What evidence have we that conscious activity of some grade goes on in what appears to be a state of complete unconsciousness? We have no direct evidence at the time. The only possible evidence is that which we can adduce when we wake up. But then we expressly deny having had any experience whatsoever in deep sleep. We quite definitely assert, "We knew nothing". This is particularly evident when sleep comes irresistibly inspite of all our efforts to avoid it, and then we are suddenly awakened from it. It is merely our dogmatic assumption that the

self must function consciously in order to be itself, combined with the further assumption that the self must exist in deep sleep, that accounts for our arbitrary fiat that the self should function in sleep just as it does in waking life. Against this, we have the definite evidence of our waking consciousness. This evidence cannot be set aside. It is not contradicted. But if that is so, the deep-sleep experience is not continuous with the experiences of the waking ego. The two constitute distinct states in which the same ego does not function. In the state of deep sleep, there is no ego at all.

This discontinuity in the life of the waking ego is also suggested by a consideration of the state of dreaming. We have been dreaming let us say. And suddenly we are roused. Once again there is a sense of discontinuity. We *wake up into* a new realm of reality. We need a new adjustment. The perceptions which ruled our dreaming life have evaporated. They constituted a certain realm of reality for us while we dreamt. Now they are seen to be without reality, pure hallucinations. Is the waking ego conscious of its own identity in the two states? Evidently not. The dreaming self appears to it an alien self whose experiences it would not appropriate. It had lost itself while dreaming. It has now regained itself.

We thus find that the states constitute a distinct phenomenon. They introduce discontinuity in our ordinary notion of the conscious self. At the same time, it is one and the same self that claims to have the experience of the states. Only this self cannot be the exclusive entity which functions in a particular state. It cannot be the conscious ego of waking life. It can only be a self of a higher order which remains the same in all the states, and is in this sense beyond the states.

The waking ego begins its life when it comes into contact, through the sense-organs, with an objective world. It is accordingly not present in the other states, and cannot know them. But can it know the state of wakefulness itself? That too is not possible. Wakefulness has no form except as it stands related to some other state. If we conceived a situation in which the waking state did not alternate with any other state, if it was the only state there was, it could not possibly be objectified or known as any particular state whatsoever. We have to go beyond the waking state, to an intuition which may be said to reveal the transition from one state into another, in order to explain the possibility of our knowledge of any of those states.

This is borne out by the way in which we know any particular state, including the state of wakeful-

ness. We do not exactly know the latter while we are said to be awake. While we are awake, we know the objects of the senses. For that is the defining character of wakefulness. We properly know the state of wakefulness in the experience of the transition into it from some other state We are in sleep; and we wake up from it. It is in this experience of *waking up*, that the two states are known. They are known simultaneously. In one and the same consciousness, we know that we slept and that we are now awake. The status of this consciousness is quite distinct from that of consciousness which knows objects in waking life. It reveals the states and is therefore outside the states. It is truly transcendental consciousness.

It is quite naturally argued that in order to have any experience of transition from one state into another, there must be a real transition. There must be the states succeeding each other. This succession of states is known by a consciousness which is not of the states. It is unaffected by the coming and the going of the states. It ever remains the same, immutable. It neither sleeps nor does it wake up. It is awake even while we sleep; for it reveals this very state of slumber. And so far as our ordinary state of wakefulness is concerned, it may truly be said to be a higher wakefulness. For

our ordinary wakefulness lapses and has an end. But that which reveals it does not lapse. Our ordinary wakefulness is only another slumber. For we reject it as not-self, and put it away from the self as some kind of object. It does not belong to the deepest stratum of our being, which represents pure and immutable wakefulness.

It follows that there is no real cessation of our consciousness while life lasts. Even in the state of deep sleep, our fundamental consciousness remains. It is only when this consciousness is associated with a limiting condition, that it functions in a particular state. When it is associated with mental life as determined by the operations of the sense-organs and the activities of thought, it gets the name of the waking ego or the knower. When it is associated with mental life as determined by the traces or the impressions of sensible experiences, it gets the name of the dreamer. But in the state of deep sleep, it remains merely itself,—pure, objectless consciousness. (Sankara-Bhāsya, Pada 1, Sûtra 10.)

A question naturally arises here. We have said that it is one and the same self that remains in all the states and knows them. This may be so. But does this not mean that the states are real just as the self is real? The states occur. If they did not occur, how could the self know them? The states

at least cannot be said to be illusory. The self that functions in waking life may be said to construct its objects. But the self that knows the states cannot be said to construct them; and this for the simple reason that it is a transcendental entity. This entity does nothing. It remains unaffected by the operations of waking or of dreaming consciousness. It merely reveals. And it can only reveal what is presented to it.

Let us suppose that the states occur. But can they be real? They would be real if we can point out some entity which has those states or falls in those states. After all the states are *mine*. They are not in the air. They are necessarily claimed by some person. If they are real, they are real as *my* states or as *your* states, and so on. This is quite unlike the physical objects. They remain, to all appearances, public objects. There must therefore be some entity called "I" which really has the states. This entity cannot be the empirical ego which functions only in waking life. Can it be the transcendental self which is said to reveal the states? But this self never really has any state. It is outside the states, and is unaffected by them. The conclusion is forced upon us that the states do not really belong to any entity that we can name. When I say "I am awake", or again that "I slept",

this "I" must be understood to be different from the empirical ego. It represents the immutable self. But the identity of this self with each of the states in turn is a false identity. The self does not really sleep or really wake up. It is by falsely identifying each of the states with the self that the states appear to be real. They are in fact illusory.

It was said that the states are not constructed, but revealed as they are. This too is not correct. A state which is in identity with the self could not be objectified. And if it could not be objectified, its character as a state would not emerge. How could it ever be revealed as a state? It is essential for a state that it should be objectified. But then it is already a construction of the objectifying consciousness. The pure transcendental consciousness does not objectify, and does not therefore know. The only relation in which it can enter with any state is one of identity. But then the state itself is lost. It does not fall apart from the self, and is not object of any kind. It is the self itself.

We say that the self is awake. But as long as wakefulness is in identity with the self, it is no kind of object, and there is no sense in speaking of the self as *being awake*. When however we do so speak, wakefulness has already lost its identity with the self. It is no longer real wakefulness. Can it be

anything more than a construction? The only self that can intuit it, is in no position to objectify it. But the self that objectifies it, namely the conscious ego, cannot certainly be said to intuit it.

This is also evident with regard to the state of dreaming. We may be dreaming. But what is real to us at the time are the dream-objects. We do not, and cannot, know that we are dreaming. The state of dreaming is no kind of object. It can only be said to be in identity with the real self. It is only when we wake up and the identity is broken, that the state of dreaming emerges. But then it has already ceased to be real. Its character as that particular state is thus only realised by the waking ego whose object it is. It is not directly intuited by the latter. It is no more than constructed.

The character of being constructed is particularly evident with respect to the state of deep sleep. It will be admitted by all that while we are in deep slumber, we have no awareness whatsoever. We do not even know that we are ignorant, that we know nothing, etc. It is a state of being in which we are absolutely free from affirmations of any kind or negations of any kind. No-one who slept ever felt that he had any form of deficiency in him. This state has accordingly been compared to the state of perfection, when the object-less self alone is. It is

the state of pure bliss, without loss and without defect of any kind. And yet when we wake up, this perfected state of being has assumed a more restricted and specified form. It has become a "state of deep sleep",—a state of ignorance and of privation. Is not this image a construction of the waking ego which finds in the state of deep sleep the mere negation of the objects of waking life? If we conceived a situation in which a person went into sleep and never returned from it, would sleep appear to him as a state of ignorance? Evidently, it is he who wakes up that has this experience, not he who sleeps. The state of sleep as we know it on waking up is clearly our construction.

We conclude that the states are not real, but illusory. We are naturally inclined to suppose that the states succeed one another, and that one and the same self runs through them all. This is no doubt a simple enough idea to grasp. But it is not exactly true to facts. It is true only so far as it gives meaning to the common-sense view of things. States do appear to succeed one another in perpetual cycles; and there is one and the same self that claims to know them all. The truer state of things however is somewhat different. The successiveness of the states is only an appearance. This appearance is grounded on a timeless reality which is our

true self. This self does not pass from state to state. The passing is just part of the appearance of the states.

It is a valid philosophical principle that we must not admit more than what is strictly necessitated by the facts of our experience. If, for example, we are in a particular state, but do not know, and cannot know, that we are in it, we must, for all rational purposes, recognise that we are not in it. For knowledge is the *sine qua non* of being. If this is true, then we do not sleep while we are said to be in sleep, but while we know this to have been the case. The so-called earlier fact assumes its form in the later fact, which is the experience of waking up as we say. It is not that we must sleep first and wake up afterwards, and in the process know the two states? We have no meaning for the first real sleep which we never know. The only sleep which we know is the sleep which is already past, and which is realised in the knowledge of the transition from it to wakefulness. There is no real transition which *precedes* this knowledge. For we have no equivalent in our knowledge for it. Thus we do not know one state and *then* a succeeding state. We know the two at the same time, in one intuition. This intuition is essentially not like any intuition of waking life; for the latter is part of the appearance, and it

is as clearly revealed as is its absence in the state of deep sleep. The intuition which shows up the states is beyond the states. It indicates the ultimate, intelligent and immutable self.

CHAPTER XI

Transcendental Consciousness

WE have seen in the previous chapter that the empirical consciousness of waking life is not the only consciousness. We have to admit consciousness of a higher grade which reveals the states of consciousness. The nature of this consciousness needs to be further elucidated.

The notion of a transcendental consciousness may appear to be inadmissible. There is nothing transcendental anywhere in our experience. The only consciousness of which we are authorised to speak is the consciousness that knows a certain object, or reveals a certain content. This is the only consciousness there is. But there is nothing transcendental about it. It should more properly be called empirical consciousness. Indeed, there may be consciousness of a super-sensible or transcendental entity which we do not at present possess. This consciousness may itself be called transcendental. But our meaning of consciousness remains unaffected.

Consciousness is what reveals or knows; and it is immaterial what it knows. All consciousness is, from this point of view, of the same type. It is the type of the empirical consciousness.

Let us suppose that our empirical consciousness is the only real consciousness. What distinguishes this consciousness is the dualism of consciousness and object. If this is so, then any consciousness which reveals or knows without entering in a dualistic relation would be non-empirical consciousness. We contend that this is the only real consciousness wherever we happen to find consciousness. The so-called empirical consciousness is, in this sense, itself non-empirical. We shall find this on a more minute analysis of it.

We often analyse the fact of knowledge into an ultimate and irreducible dualism of the subject and the object. If this analysis is true, it entails the counter process of the reconstitution of knowledge out of two distinct elements. The more we concentrate upon the latter aspect of the problem, the more it becomes evident that in actual knowledge, consciousness and the object do not stand apart. It would not do to say that the two are merely "compresent", or even that they have the unique relation of knowledge.

The relation of "compresence" is not intelligible. If two entities A and B are together, they are not essentially or internally related. They may have nothing to do with each other. Knowledge-relation however is not, in this sense, an external relation. The terms of this relation are not neutral to each other. One term has something to do with the other; for it *knows* the other or *takes note* of it.

Shall we say that this taking note of the other is a unique relation, which is not further analysable? It appears to us that having admitted a real dualism of terms, the question remains, how can one term take note of another? How can two distinct terms come together in the internal unity of knowledge? For it is evident that in actual knowledge, one term takes up the other or comprehends it. It is inclusive of the other. It does not merely turn to the other. It goes out of itself and bridges the gulf dividing them. So much is this the case that the terms are not exactly distinguishable. They have no distinct limits separating them. If we draw the limits of the object, consciousness has already transcended them; for it is what apprehends those limits. In fact, consciousness cannot be kept back from anything, or distinguished from anything. Distinction of consciousness from the thing would be suicidal to the thing. The thing would not be known,

and there would be no distinction to make. Can we distinguish the thing from consciousness? That we make the distinction is undeniable. But this distinction is subordinate to a deeper and more intimate relation. Distinction itself is possible, because the thing is primarily and fundamentally in the relation of identity with consciousness.

It might be thought that there is here no relation of identity. There is only a unity in difference; and the unity is as real as the difference. It appears to us however that any relation, short of identity, merely keeps the question open. The relation of identity is necessarily a relation of false identity. For, one thing cannot *be* another thing. But this relation is well-known. It is admitted by all, and offers no problem. If any relation is intelligible, it is the relation of identity. One thing simply passes for another. In all erroneous perception, this relation is realised. The illusory snake is identified with the rope. One thing takes on the character of another.

Any real unity of distincts is ontologically impossible. But if we have to maintain both unity and difference by the very nature of the case, there must be the relation of subordination between the two. Both cannot be equally real. If, now, distinction were ultimate, the terms would never come

together in any real unity, the object would not be known, and the very distinction between it and consciousness cannot be made. In order that the distinction itself should become possible, the unity must be primary. The thing known must be non-distinct from consciousness and in the relation of identity with it. The object is what it is, because it has this relation to consciousness.

There are neo-realists who abolish consciousness altogether and put things in its place. Reality consists of things or physical entities. Consciousness is nothing but a certain cross-section of this reality defined by a specific nervous response. In actual knowledge, things alone are, as thus defined; there is no mysterious entity called consciousness. We suggest just the opposite of this view. In actual knowledge, there is only consciousness, pure and undivided; there are no things. If there are things, they are in complete identity with consciousness. This is the only real moment of knowledge. We cannot speak of it or reflect upon it. The moment we reflect, we have driven the two apart. We have set up a dualism. We *speak* of the object, we no longer *know* it. The relation of identity has come to an end. Consciousness itself has turned up as a distinct term. It is no longer actually knowing. It is only externally

related to its so-called object. Get down to actual knowledge, and we find that there is no dualism, no things. There is only pure consciousness. The dualism is a product of thought or imagination. It is not available in knowledge.

To say that the knowledge-relation is a unique relation is really to refuse to analyse the relation. It is merely to stop with the fact of knowledge without facing the problem of the relation which it implies. We must recognise that consciousness is not a thing which stands side by side with its object as a kind of another object. If it is real, it is real as something which is never an object, and which is therefore essentially transcendental in character. It can only therefore enter in the relation of identity with its objects. Any other relation would degrade it to a kind of object. Our so-called empirical consciousness itself would thus appear to be in reality non-empirical. There is no other real consciousness.

There is no mysticism about this consciousness. It is the only consciousness there is, whatever we may be knowing; and it always knows just in the same way. But while there may be some plausibility in arguing that a real dualism of terms is necessary when we are knowing physical objects, this is not so in the case of higher grades of objectivity. In the latter case, a dualism of consciousness

and its object is not possible, and the transcendental character of consciousness becomes still more evident. The object can only be in the relation of identity with consciousness, or it is nothing at all. We shall now consider the nature of some of these objects.

Physical objects are known by the self, through the right sources of knowledge, during wakefulness. This self, necessarily relative to its objects, is called the empirical ego. The question is, how is the ego known? It may be said that the knowledge of the ego does not offer any special problem. The ego is known just as physical objects are known. The ego knows objects; and while it knows them, it may also know itself as knowing them. There is the same dualism of ordinary knowledge in the case of the ego.

We contend that the ego cannot know itself. Two different views about the ego may be considered in this connection. (1) There is a view according to which the ego is self-continuous with itself through-out a period of waking life, if not throughout life itself. If this is so, the ego is continuously the subject and never the object. How can it know itself as object? It cannot evidently be subject and object at the same time. (2) Let us suppose that there is a series of ego-es so that the earlier can become the object of the later. But then have we

not broken up the period of waking life into a series of alternating states? For with a series of ego-es succeeding each other, there will be a series of breaks or gaps in the continuity of waking life. We shall have within a period of wakefulness, the same alternation of states which we recognise on the larger scale of the general states of consciousness. The conclusion is forced upon us that if we restrict ourselves to a state of wakefulness which does not alternate with any other state, we can account for our knowledge of things outside of us, but we cannot account for our knowledge of the ego. The knowledge of the ego is part of the knowledge of the states which are only revealed by a higher consciousness which is non-egoistic.

The ego is known as what comes and goes with wakefulness. It functions while we are awake, and it ceases to exist while we are asleep. It is, by its very nature, never continuous with itself. If it were continuous, it could not fall away from our essential self. It would be just this self, not the ego. There would be no possibility of knowing it as object. As it is, the ego gets dissociated from the self and reveals itself as some kind of object only. And yet this object never confronts the self. As long as the ego *is*, it is in identity with the self. It is only as it is in this identity that it can function

intelligently. But when the identity is over, the ego has ceased to be. It is never in opposition to the self. The ego cannot stand by itself as something that can be presented to the self as a physical object may be said to be presented. It is nothing if it is not in the relation of identity with the self that reveals it. If ever there was an entity which was constituted by a certain relation, and was simply nothing in itself and apart from the relation, the ego unquestionably is such an entity. The non-empirical consciousness which reveals the ego is the reality of the ego. The ordinary dualism of knowledge is not available here.

We come next to the *series* of mental acts or events. How is this series known? One term cannot know another. Even if we suppose that one term can know another, we have a discreteness of another kind. And the same question would arise, how is this series of terms known? There are two courses open to us: (1) We may suppose that since the series is not a series of contemporary members, there is only one term that is real at a time. The earlier members of the series fall within this term and form the content of it. They are accordingly known by it. This view is not tenable. We have said that there is only one term that is real at a time. What do we mean by the expression

'at a time'? Unless we mean that there are other times at which other terms are real, the expression in question has no meaning. But then we have admitted a real series of moments of time and a corresponding series of terms, neither of which can fall within or include any other term. We cannot get away with one real term which includes the rest. The other terms of the series are equally real, and they cannot be included. We have to account for our knowledge of a real series; and this cannot be done through any single term of the series. Or what is the same thing, A may know B which in fact precedes it; but it cannot know it *as preceding.* The above view would only be logical, if there were no change in our experience, if the series of experiences were not a growing but a static series, and if there was one eternal series which was eternally known. In other words, if there was no real time. This however would not be true of our experience as it is.

(2) The other alternative is the supposition that beyond the terms of the series, there is an unbroken and unceasing consciousness. It does not fall into a series. It is the very ground of any known series. The empirical subject is a sort of an exclusive entity. It is related to its own particular content, and is so far determined by it. It necessarily falls into a

series, a series relative to the series of mental acts or mental awarenesses. The consciousness that reveals the series runs through the series, and remains quite unchanged. It does not know any member of the series or the series as a whole as the empirical subject may be said to know its object. If it did, it could no longer be a self-continuous or an immutable consciousness. The essential character of this consciousness is that it never opposes anything to itself. It never enters into a dualistic relation. The mental events are indeed related to it. But this relation is one of false identity. When therefore the identity is broken, the event has ceased to be, but the pure consciousness has not on that account been interrupted. It has revealed the passing of the event, and so the series as such. There is one unbroken consciousness which runs through the series, and makes the knowledge of the series possible. This consciousness is non-empirical or transcendental. It is the ground of all subjective or mental activities. It is beyond the mind, and reveals the mental processes to us.

We thus find that while the physical object is known in a mental act, the mental act itself is not known in another mental act. That would lead to a *regressus ad-infinitum*. We have to stop somewhere and say that the knowing act knows without

being itself known in another act. This last act is not known in the ordinary way. We have to say that it is in the relation of identity with the higher consciousness. It is revealed, if at all, only in this sense. I have, for example, the feeling of happiness. This feeling is not further felt. The moment I am happy, that moment my happiness is known. It is revealed, because of the relation of identity. We shall only go a step further. The real moment of happiness is the moment of non-duality or of identity. But it is just the moment when no kind of dualism is available, and happiness cannot be said to be our object. It is only when the identity is broken and the happiness is already past, that happiness becomes our object and we *know* ourselves to be happy. Paradoxical therefore as it may appear, we know ourselves to be happy when we have ceased to be happy. The same argument applies to all mental events. In the moment of identity, there is no objectivity. Objectivity emerges as the identity is seen to be false.

It is not only our *knowledge* of things that is revealed by the non-empirical consciousness. Our *ignorance* of things is also similarly revealed. Let us suppose that I am ignorant of an object A. But how is it that I am aware of my ignorance? For, in order to know my ignorance, I must know the

object of that ignorance; and if I know the object, I am not ignorant. There seems to be a contradiction here. I cannot know and not know a thing at the same time. The contradiction can only be avoided if there are two different senses of knowing, so that I may be knowing in one sense and not knowing in the other. It is now certain that I do not know the object of my ignorance *empirically* or through any valid means of knowledge. If I knew it thus, my ignorance of it would just be dissipated. My ignorance of the object then is in respect of its empirical knowledge. It is not in respect of *all* knowledge. There may be a sense in which the object is known, before it can be declared to be unknown. This sense is the fundamental sense in which there is no ignorance of anything, there is only knowledge.

It is evident now that I may be ignorant without knowing that I am ignorant. This should be real ignorance. But since I am not aware of it, ignorance is not ignorance *to me*. *I* alone am, ignorance is not. Or what is the same thing, ignorance is in the relation of identity with me, so that it does not fall apart from me and does not become my object. This ignorance is not determinate ignorance. It is not ignorance of such and such an object. But this indeterminate ignorance is as good as no ignorance. There is nothing that, we might say, is not

known. Everything is known. We are not aware of being ignorant of anything whatsoever. We can well claim that we know all. In this sense, all possible objects of ignorance are already known.

What is however no defect in our knowledge turns out to be a defect later on. The indeterminate ignorance becomes determinate when we begin to know specific objects. It is post-knowledge ignorance. When I know A, I become aware that till then I did not know A. I become aware of my past ignorance of A. This past ignorance evidently cannot be known by the empirical subject which knows A. That which knows A cannot at the same time not know A. It can only be known by that consciousness which knows A non-empirically, or in the relation of identity, before the empirical knowledge of A has arisen. Or what is the same thing, the past ignorance can only be known by that consciousness which exists prior to our knowledge of A, and which reveals this knowledge as well as its prior absence. The empirical knowledge of A stands contrasted with the absence of this knowledge. Ignorance has meaning only in this relation to knowledge. Apart from this relation, it is nothing at all. Pure and mere ignorance is not ignorance in any sense. It is indistinguishable from pure knowledge.

It will here be argued that the *past ignorance* of a thing is not the only form of ignorance of which we

are aware. I am also aware of my present ignorance. I am aware, for example, that I do not know what is in your pocket, or what is going on in a distantstar. Here also it appears to us that ignorance is co-extensive with our knowledge. What am I ignorant of? This question has no answer except when I have actually known. Ignorance is ignorance only in the retrospect. When I say that I am ignorant of what is in your pocket, I know certain things, namely you, your pocket, etc. There is a question before me, what is contained in this pocket? By putting this question, I have made myself conscious of ignorance. But has this ignorance any form? We contend that the form which it has is based upon our anticipations of knowledge.

We cannot question in complete and entire ignorance. Every question proceeds on some knowledge which we have. The question "what is in this pocket?", is based upon our knowledge of things that are generally found in pockets or that are even likely to be put there. The happenings in a star are conceivably very different from the happenings in your mind. A question of this sort implies some knowledge of the likely things of our past experience that may be found in a particular place at a particular time. We cannot question without any knowledge whatsoever of the things questioned

about. As we supply the kinds of things or happenings that may be found in a particular place, we give some form to ignorance. This form is still more or less indeterminate. It becomes determinate as our knowledge becomes more clearly defined.

Ignorance cannot transcend our knowledge. It is only as much determinate as is our knowledge. Indeterminate ignorance is no ignorance. If I do not know anything, I cannot be aware that I do not know it. My ignorance would be simply coincident with the unknown thing. It cannot be said to relate to anything in particular. But as I formulate questions and thereby create possible courses of knowledge, I also create further ignorance. Ignorance is thus bound down to knowledge. It is merely the prior aspect of it. We must first know, and then alone we can have any meaning for ignorance. Our present ignorance is not in principle different from ignorance which we know as definitely past. Ignorance does not stand by itself, independent of knowledge, and as a pure indeterminateness. A pure indeterminateness has no form, and it cannot be our object.

The facts of knowledge and of ignorance equally point to a non-empirical consciousness which is unceasing and immutable. This consciousness can only be said to have the relation of false identity

with the objects which it reveals. It reveals the illusory. It never reveals the real. This is quite unlike what empirical consciousness, on the common-sense view, is supposed to do.

We conclude that the transcendental consciousness is an ever-present fact. It is the only consciousness there is. The empirical consciousness is not real consciousness. It functions as consciousness only through the relation of identity which we have indicated. Otherwise, it is some kind of object; for it is itself revealed or known. The transcendental consciousness constitutes our real self. It tolerates only an *illusory* "other", not a *real* "other." It is the ultimate ground of all reality.

CHAPTER XII

Immortality

THE problem of immortality is not generally considered to be a philosphical problem. Immortality of the soul is treated as a religious dogma. It may be accepted or it may be rejected, but it cannot be proved.

There are evident difficulties in proving it. Whether there is a soul is itself questionable. But even if we grant it to be real in some sense, we can never know that it survives the disintegration of the body. It is certain that we have, and can have, no direct experience of immortality. We may speculate about the being, the nature, and the survival of the soul. But what guarantee is there that such speculation will be true to facts?

We are not concerned, in philosophy, with speculation about things which we do not know. We must leave the ground of mere belief and tackle our actual experience. There may be a soul which is unknown and mysterious. But it has no meaning for

us. The soul which has meaning for us is the soul which enters our experience. It is indicated by the intuition of "I". This intuition has been analysed by us. We may mean by "I", the self that is known in ordinary self-consciousness. This self we have seen is related to some object. It is the empirical ego. It functions in waking life only. But this is not our real self. It represents the superficial self, or the self as object. It is absent in deep sleep. The real self is that which reveals the empirical ego and continues unchanged in all the states. This self might be a mysterious entity if it was absolutely unknown. But this is not the case. We cannot say that it is not known at all. Indeed, we do not know it in its purity. For, in its purity, it is no kind of object. But it may be said to be the object of the intuition of "I" in so far as it is in the relation of identity with the empirical ego which functions in waking life. As long as I am awake, there is no distinction. There is one self only, and that is an intelligent self. In fact, in the intuition of "I", there is a perfect knot of the intelligent and the unintelligent. The intelligent self gains objectivity which is not easily shaken off; by the self we invariably mean the "I", for what is not "I" is less than the self. There is no higher conception of the self than the meant "I." What is higher than

this conception is the inconceivable non-dual being of the self itself. The unintelligent ego, on the other hand, gains intelligence; it functions as the very self. So far then as we claim to know the self at all, we cannot disclaim all knowledge of our true and higher self. It is the self that represents in our experience the entity called the soul.

We have indeed no experience of survival or immortality. It is, by the very nature of the case, impossible. At the same time, if we have no relevant experience, can we have a relevant problem? We do not have a problem about things which entirely transcend our experience. We only have a problem, when we have experience which we cannot render self-consistent, or which we cannot relate to things that we do understand. A problem is a demand for self-consistency and intelligibility; and this is achieved through analysis, and reduction to forms of intuition which are simple and self-evident. In no case, can we leave the ground of experience. The problem arises from experience; for it is experience that sets a problem. And the problem is resolved through experience; for there are forms of experience which are simple, ultimate and intelligible in themselves.

We may have no experience in the ordinary sense in connection with immortality. But have we not

a problem of immortality? If we do have a problem, it can only arise on the ground of certain forms of our present experience which anticipate future experience. The question, what will happen to me when I die?, must have its analogue in our present experience. I must have a meaning for "what it is to die"; and also a meaning for survival or immortality. But if the problem rests on our present experience, the fact that we have not yet died is quite immaterial. It is without any philosophical significance. What has this significance is the experience which we actually have. This experience then must be logically on a par with the experience which is yet to be. It must contain within itself all those logical elements which are necessary for the resolution of the problem. The problem of immortality is a live problem, because it can be resolved like any other philosophical problem which is based on present experience. If we admit any peculiarity about it, that peculiarity must be a-logical. We cannot really argue that there might be unknown elements in actual death which might interfere with our present reasoning and our present conclusions. We can only proceed, in philosophy, on the assumption that our experience as it is, is itself the whole, and that there is nothing outside of it of which we might take note.

The problem of immortality however is often considered from the ethico-religious stand-point. The reality of the soul as something independent of the body is taken for granted. It is then argued that our present life is not the only life of the soul. If it were the only life, the soul would be suffering here for what it has not done, and not getting any reward in future for what it is doing. Kant gave a variation of this argument when he said that immortality or life after death is indicated by the ethical consideration that virtue is not fully rewarded in this life; and that although virtue should be practised for its own sake, the requirements of justice cannot be said to be satisfied unless the virtuous man is in the same proportion also happy. The aspiration after immortality is therefore a legitimate aspiration.

This argument is quite valid as far as it goes. We do not however subscribe to the division of moral duty and its reward which is said to be happiness. If it is true that the moral law is absolute, I must obey it whatever the consequences. There is no reason why such obedience should have any reward. If happiness is the reward of obedience even as a free gift, the obedience cannot be quite disinterested; and if there is no necessary connection between the two, absence of happiness in this life has no

implication of happiness in the hereafter. We may however suppose that there is a necessary connection. In that case, happiness cannot be really absent when we follow the path of duty. Only it must be understood as some sort of inner contentment or peace or self-reconciliation. But then we cannot argue that the claims of justice are not satisfied even here.

Immortality is more truly based upon the fact of the moral law itself. It can be argued that confining ourselves to our present life only, there can be no such thing as the majesty of the moral law for us. If the spirit itself is ephemeral, tied to the body, and so mortal, it is governed by the law of matter. There can be no other law called the law of the spirit or the moral law. There will be no real virtue in being moral, and no moral taint in seeking the biological good. Morality and religion are impossible without an independent soul that has its own laws, and that rules matter but is not dominated by matter. Thus life after death is part of any system of religion or morality whatsoever.

We also do not agree with the idea of the moral law as suggested by Kant. There is no such thing as the "categorical imperative" of the will. This notion of the "categorical imperative" is to be traced to the idea that the law is given by God, and

then to the idea that the same law is implanted within man. This is an external view of morality. The true law of morality is the law of freedom. This freedom is not positive. It does not require us to do certain acts. It is only negatively indicated. It is indicated with reference to what is its very opposite, namely desire. There is nothing that "thou shalt do" or "shalt not do". There is no prescription or prohibition in respect of action. All that is important for morality is, *how* you do an action, or in what *spirit* you do it. Do you do an act with a desire for some ulterior end, or do you do it without any desire and so freely? Whatever we do with desire, however noble, is a sort of bondage for the will. Such action leads to certain results which have to be enjoyed. This enjoyment,—or better still suffering, for all desire has in it the seed of suffering,—may ultimately not be considered in an external way. A low or carnal desire is its own punishment. A noble desire is not exactly punishment. But it too does not make for complete happiness or peace. Even a noble soul suffers sympathetic torture, because certain ends which are just, moral and benevolent in character are not fulfilled. All desire is a form of privation or pain. It is only the absence of all desire or desirelessness that can be equated with complete happiness or fulfilment.

All desire makes for suffering; and all life is in a sense suffering. This suffering may take the form of unfulfilled desire. But it may also take the form of enjoyment of interested activity. This enjoyment is rightly compared to the removal of a privation and is in that sense no positive happiness; it is entirely negative. In any case, actions done with a desire lead to their appropriate fruit. This fruit does not all mature in this life. We desire not only certain things here and now. There are limitations to what we can achieve in this life. Accordingly we desire greater happiness in the here-after. We do live in the future, and act for the future. A belief in "life after death" is part of any religion whatsoever. This however does not amount to any philosophical justification. Immortality is a faith only, so far as the ethico-religious stand-point is concerned.

We come now to the psycho-physical argument. This is a philosophical stand-point and does not involve any religious belief. It is argued that the self is not the same thing as the body. Nobody does ever assert that he is his body. The body being distinct from the self, its disintegration cannot mean the end of the self. This view is rejected by others who argue that we have no evidence of any intelligence functioning apart from the body. The

life of the soul is tied to the body. Whatever then the status of the soul in the body, it has no status apart from the body.

It appears to us that this question must be considered strictly from the point of view of our own experience. Is the consciousness of "I" dependent upon the body in any way? It is evident that if we look at it from outside or from the stand-point of a spectator, there is nothing peculiar about it. It is like any other consciousness of objects. It appears conditioned by the body. Apart from the body it is not available at all. There is no evidence that the consciousness of "I" can occur without the body. The body may thus be quite primary, and the consciousness of "I" dependent upon it. But this is not the only way, or the right way, to look upon our intuition of "I". We must look at it from inside, as it comes to us in our own personal experience. We must look at it subjectively. Here, the body-consciousness is not primary. The consciousness of "I" stands by itself. The consciousness of the body is entirely absent from it. We cannot detect the body, by any amount of analysis, as an element in our consciousness of "I". I may be conscious of seeing with the eye or hearing with the ear. I may be conscious of thinking in the head. But I am not conscious of any awareness of "I" in the head. The

"I"-consciousness is *prior* to the consciousness of the head or the body as such.

The consciousness of the body, whether as something external or as what is internally felt, necessarily implies and is based upon the consciousness of "I". It is *I* that am conscious of seeing the body, or feeling the body internally, or functioning with the body. The body is felt to be *mine*. If it is not mine, it may be anything, but it is not *body* in any sense. I own the body. The body does not own me. It is my body or nothing at all. If then the relation of the body to the self that owns it is ended, that cannot affect the latter. The "I"-consciousness is prior to the body-consciousness and is the very ground of it.

We shall go even further. The real "I" is not given in any specific consciousness which may be conditioned by the body. It is the running thread in all forms of specific consciousness as well as the absence of the same. It is the immutable ground which reveals both. The self which exists before the rise of any specific consciousness cannot be itself given in any specific consciousness. How can *it* then be related to the body or be dependent upon it? The relation of dependence, as we have shown before, is just in the reverse direction. The body is what it is, an instrument of intelligence, because it

is in the relation of false identity with the fundamental consciousness which is our self. The self is in-itself. It is pure intelligence. The body is super-imposed upon it, and we proceed to think and act as though we were one with the body. But reflection discloses the false identity. The disintegration of the body can therefore only mean the termination of the false identity, with the result that the body loses its intelligent character which was borrowed from the self. It cannot mean any change in the essential nature of the latter.

This brings us to the main philosophical problem about immortality. This problem arises because there are certain situations in our present experience when the self appears to be lost to itself. The state of deep sleep is as good as death. It represents complete cessation of all conscious activity. There is no question of degrees. The negation is as complete as it can be in any possible death. We cannot descend lower in the darkness of ignorance or the darkness of non-being. It is this condition that gives meaning to death. There is absolutely no difference in the internal form of the two conditions. The only difference that might be, and that gives rise to the problem of survival after death, is the question of duration. The state of deep sleep is necessarily brief and passing. It is demanded by

the body and is refreshing to the body. We are not upset by the prospect of it. We welcome it. We are almost certain that we shall wake up again in the morning and attend to our duties as usual and with greater vigour. We love life. We may not love sleep equally well, although when it comes irresistibly, there is nothing that is sweeter than it. But we certainly always love it as a means to more active and healthy life. We have no similar assurance with regard to death. It is not an experience in the body. It is the end of all such experiences. It is not a passing state like sleep. It appears to be a sleep of an unlimited duration, or a sleep from which there might be no re-awakening. This endless sleep is certainly unwelcome to us. It not only reduces all values of life to nothing, but it cuts athwart our fundamental self-love. Nothing is dearer to us than *to be ourselves*. And here we seem to lose ourselves for ever.

Death appears to differ from sleep not in form, but in duration. This however is not possible. The duration makes all the difference to the form. If we did not wake up from sleep, sleep would not be our object, and it could not have the form of negation. Sleep would not be sleep. The same thing is true about death. It is because we contemplate death as object, that it assumes for us

its present form, or the form of negation. It is only as risen from death that death can be any state of the self at all, that death can be death. Paradoxical although it may seem, the only death that there is, is the death which we see with our own eyes. Our present conception is based upon a future reawakening. There is no real death in the sense in which it is supposed to supervene upon or engulf the self. If it was any such thing, if it was an endless state of unconscious being, it could not be represented as *a certain predicament* of the self or as a certain state of it. Death must either have the finished character of an object with all the limitations of objectivity, or it could not be distinguished from the self as a certain state of it. An endless death, in either case, would be a contradiction in terms.

√It is also evident that once we admit the fact of life, the *cycle* of life, death and life again is quite inevitable. This is seen from the analogy of sleep. If I am aware of past sleep, I am necessarily aware of it as an interval in the continuity of my wakefulness. My memory goes back to earlier wakefulness. If it did not thus go back, sleep would not appear as a state which I experienced. It is part of my experience, only because I intuit it as an interruption or as an interval within the continuity of my

wakefulness. Thus a prior sleep presupposes a still prior wakefulness. Similarly, when I think of impending sleep, I already think of it as past, or as a state which intervenes between my present wakefulness and my future arising. If I do not thus contemplate it, if sleep is taken as unending, it could not possibly be any experience of mine. For clearly, future sleep cannot be part of my present experience. And when I actually fall asleep, I am certainly not aware of the fact. How then do I know my impending sleep? Our answer is that it can be known, on past analogy, as an intervening period between our present and future wakefulness. Sleep is nothing if it is not *an interval only*. We thus see that the cyclic character of these states is part of their very meaning. If I have life, it is certain that I shall die, and that I shall arise again. Life leads to death, and death to life in an endless cycle; and like any cycle, there can be no beginning and no end, no first term and no last.

The question of duration of a state like sleep does not really exist; and this for the simple reason that it has no duration whatsoever. Indeed, we go by the clock and the time-table of our solar system, and determine the length of our sleep. But this is a computation which is external to the sleep itself. Sleep, which is the negation of all conscious

activity, is unfilled time or empty time; and empty time cannot represent any duration whatsoever. When time itself is at a stand-still, what meaning can we attach to lengths or periods of time? The question of duration does not therefore arise with regard to death. An endless death cannot really and materially be longer than a moment of complete cessation of conscious activity as in sleep. The only thing that matters is the internal form; and this form is logically impossible without the entailment of a cycle.

The question of survival may be disposed of as we have done. But is this what we mean by the immortality of the self? If we do, then such immortality is mechanical, meaningless and without value. It has been compared to the endless rounds which a camel has to make in a grinding mill. A real death would not be much worse than this senseless going round and round without end. Immortality can only have value when it is a lasting state of the self and at the same time the most elevated state of it.

We have to admit that the cycle of birth and death is not our true immortality. It is more in the nature of chastisement of the soul. It is a misfortune from which it seeks to get disentangled. How is this to be done? Our answer is that we must

realise the *immortal nature* of the self. The idea that the self passes from one state into another is erroneous. The self does not pass. The states alone pass. There is movement in the object. There is no movement in the subject. The subject stands its ground and reveals the changing object. What is wrong with us is the identification of our self with the changing object. The result is that there is a false appearance of change in us. If I know myself to have life, this life would pass, and so would I appear to myself to pass also. Or as it is said, for one who has life, death is inevitable. The error consists in our initial identification with life.

The immortal character of the self is also evident from the fact that it is with extreme difficulty that death is envisaged by us. We cannot easily conceive what change can come upon us. We see deaths of others around us off and on. It fills us sympathetically with a certain fear of the deprivation and the loss of all intimate relations which it means, and also of the uncertainty of the future. But we have no idea of any change in our inner being or in the intelligent self. The only change that we know of in this connection is the change from one state into another,—from wakefulness to sleep and from sleep to wakefulness again. But here the transition is so natural that we have no feeling

of self-loss. The self seems to be always there, always the same. We have no experience of losing our self. If we had any such experience, that itself would presuppose the being of the self. This "being" then is the most fundamental fact of experience. We can have no experience to the contrary. The concept of "ceasing to be" is accordingly quite artificial. It is made up through certain external considerations. We seem to argue, "When we do not see, when we do not hear, etc., we are not. When the world has ceased to be, we have ceased to be". But we have seen that this reasoning is wrong. The self evidences every kind of absence and every kind of loss; but there is nothing that can evidence the loss of the self to us. Death may be disliked. But there is at the same time an unspoken fearlessness about it. Our immortality is not in doubt to our essential self. We see death around us, but we are not thereby beaten. We have an inner assurance of immortality, and it is only through ignorance of this that death appears to challenge our self-possession.

Our self may be immortal in the above sense. But is this all? Should not the being of the self be accompanied by some value? Mere "being" cannot have any possible value. We contend that the being of the self is the highest value. All other

things are desired or valued for the sake of the self. The self is not so desired for the sake of anything else. Self-love is the limit of all love. No-one can ever desire his own non-being. Even the person who commits suicide does not desire this. He merely desires to get relief from some pain which has become unbearable. He resorts to suicide as a means to this relief, and he naturally conceives himself as experiencing that relief and surviving the present pain in a state of painlessness. He is like the ordinary man a great believer in himself.

We may find no value in "being" as such. We are apt to emphasise those ethical and spiritual values which we can create. But such values can never lead to what is called "immortal life", or an abiding state of the soul. All activity, however elevated, is necessarily impermanent. If there is life and movement, there must be cessation of the same; and cessation is death. Again, an activity has value not in itself, but in the goal achieved by it. This goal cannot itself be any form of activity. If it is, then it is an activity which achieves nothing and which is not creative in any sense. The goal must be an accomplished state of being. But an accomplished state of being cannot be a product of any act. An act can only lead to an impermanent result, and so to further acts. And finally, a certain

state of being may be dear. But dearer than it is our own self.

All values of action are non-eternal values. They are values for the person who realises them. They are part of his ethical or spiritual endeavour. They are real only in so far as he wills them. Without this will, the value remains unrealised and therefore unreal. Such value is entirely subjective and personal. It is value for the person who has aims and purposes, and who therefore makes a distinction between good and bad ends. Without any reference to these ends, there can be no value at all. Eternal value, on the other hand, must be non-subjective. It must have no reference to ends. It must be part and parcel of being itself. This value is not external to the self to be realised by it. It is the very being of the self itself. It alone is value *in itself*, and is eternally accomplished. Such value cannot be really achieved or really lost. It can only be lost through ignorance, and regained through knowledge. It is not value through action, but value through knowledge.

We thus find that the unchanging and the immutable character of the self determines of itself the kind of value that is to be realised in immortality. It is not "a certain exalted state of being which may be achieved." Any such state will be non-abiding.

The *value* of immortality is indicated by the infinite love or blissfulness of the self. "Where there is duality, there is pain." The highest goal is the realisation through knowledge of the non-dual character of the self.

What is the character of this knowledge? The knowledge of the unrelated and the absolute cannot be positive in the sense in which we are said to know things. In the latter case, something seems to be given to intuition from outside. We seem to know the existent real. The self which is no kind of object cannot however be thus given. Its knowledge can only take another form. If the self cannot be directly given, it must be indirectly given in order to be known at all. We cannot say that it is not given. What is not given cannot be approached through knowledge. This approach becomes possible because the self is in false or illusory identity with certain forms of the object. Thus through the cancellation or the negation of the latter, the reality can be made to evidence itself. If the reality is unrelated to everything we know, it will be unrelated to knowledge altogether. The transcendent is only capable of being known through the negation of the empirical; and this is only possible when there is the relation of illusory identity between the two. In such identity, the ground is not wholly unknown.

It is known with false attributions. I know myself as being such and such. What is needed for the full and complete knowledge of the ground is merely the cancellation of the false attributions. It is not possible to reject the entire intuition of the ground and substitute another in its place. This is then how we may know the immortality of the self. What gives it the character of mortality? Evidently the idea that I have a body or that I have life. It is the character of the body or the character of life that is super-imposed upon the self. We have to make the necessary correction, and rise to knowledge through the cancellation of illusions. Life and death do not supervene upon me, and do not make any difference to me. They are only passing states that are revealed by me through their false identity with me. I remain the same for ever and ever.

If what we have said is true, and if the self is neither born nor does it die, the popular notion of the self leaving one body at death and taking up another in another place is not strictly correct. The self is not *in the body*. The self is the ground, the reality. The body is super-imposed upon it, and has communicated its character to it. This illusion is to be dispelled. The self is not in the body, going from one body to another. It is truer to say that the body is *in the self*. The relation of

a particular body with the self may be terminated. But the self does not go anywhere. The self neither goes nor does it come. It is essentially disembodied; and it is wholly unaffected by the relation or the absence of relation of a particular body to it. It is only when once the identity is falsely asserted that the self begins to be conceived as a prisoner in the body. The real state of things is just the reverse. The self is ever free. It is the body that gains or loses, that comes or goes. The self has no wanderings. It remains what it is and where it is. It is by its very nature immortal.

The traditional view of the immortality of the soul was based upon its simplicity. It was argued that if anything is simple, it is also indestructible. Now our idea of simplicity is the idea of something that has no parts, either material or non-material. Evidently, such a thing cannot be affected from outside or changed. If a thing has material parts, those parts can be separated. And if a thing has a certain character, that character may also be changed. But then the thing is no longer simple. The simple thing must be indivisible in every possible dimension. We have already seen that the self or the subject alone can be simple in this sense. Such an entity must either be that entity or nothing. Any change in it would be tantamount to a change from

being into non-being, which is inconceivable. The simple thing becomes equivalent to mere and pure being. It is doubtful whether the ancient philosophers would have admitted as much about the simplicity of the soul. Whatever that may be, there is no doubt about the temporal simplicity of the soul. If a thing changes or becomes different, it has temporal dimension, and it is divisible in that dimension. We say "it was such", and again "it has now become such." Between these two termini, there will be all degrees of such-ness. Either then the unity of the thing is lost, and we cannot say that one and the same thing had become different; or if we retain the unity, the thing becomes changeless in change. We contend that the self cannot change. It is the one point of stability in all that changes; for without it, change would not even appear. Besides, what could ever reveal its change to us? It is the ultimate ground of changelessness. It has no history and no temporal dimension. It eats up time itself. It alone is truly eternal and immortal.

CHAPTER XIII

The Individual and the Absolute

EUROPEAN philosophy offers various theories of the relation of the individual to the Absolute. But none of them is so bold or so satisfactory as the view offered by the *Advaitic* system of thought which we have here adopted. The former would all agree in one respect, whatever their other differences. They would all agree that the individual is not the Absolute. Indeed, Bosanquet would equate the Absolute with the true individual. Individuality for him stands for self-completeness or wholeness. The Absolute must certainly, on any theory, have this character. It is part of its meaning. But he would not agree that there can be a relation of identity between the finite individual and the Absolute. He would maintain that the finite individual is adjectival to the Absolute. The finite individual does not exist in his own right. He is merely an element of the Whole. The individual must accordingly lose his separateness, and share in the

fullest measure in the life of the Whole, in order to realise his own self truly.

This view does not lift our notion of the finite individual to a higher plane, nor does it throw any revealing light on the nature of the Absolute. In contrast with it, we have the view that the individual is the very Absolute,—"thou art that." There is the relation of identity between the individual as he is truly in himself and the Absolute. All that we have then to do in order to know the Absolute is to seek the true individual within us. The finite individual may be understood as adjectival to the Absolute. But he is adjectival, not because he is only *an element* in the Whole and not himself the Whole. He is adjectival, because the finitude is erroneously attributed to the Self that is the Absolute.

The advantage of this conception is evident. The notion of the Absolute is not degraded. The Absolute is not conceived in an external way. It is not conceived as a whole having an infinite number of parts. Such an Absolute could not possibly be known by any single individual. The Absolute is conceived in an integral way, *i. e.* the Absolute must be known whole and entire or it is not known at all. It has no parts and no elements. The so-called parts are not real parts. They are illusory appearances having

the relation of false identity with the Self. They are only included in this sense in the Absolute. Indeed, the physical world does not seem to have any identity with the Self. No-one ever says, "I am this thing or that". But the physical world has this identity with the "knowing" of it. It cannot be realised without this knowing and cannot be distinguished from it. The knowing in its turn is identified with the Self. We cannot distinguish the knowing from the Self that knows. It is because of this relationship of the world to the Self, that the term "mine" should be extended to include not only the body, or our thoughts and feelings, but also the physical world that is beyond our body and our mind.

The notion of the Absolute which we here suggest is the notion of the intelligent and the immutable Self. This Self is quite immediate if anything is immediate. We have not to look for the Absolute far afield. It is quite near at hand, the nearest thing to us, our very inmost and true self. Thus the notion of the individual is lifted to a higher plane. The individual is in fact the Absolute. If the individual, understood as something finite, has to shed his separateness and his individuality, the Absolute too has to shed something. It has to shed, among other things, its distantness and its otherness

to the individual. The Absolute is thus brought as near to our knowledge as anything could possibly be.

We shall now proceed to examine what some of the western idealists think about the Absolute. Most of them seem to agree that the Absolute is not simple. It must include all the differences. The differences may not be real if they are taken by themselves and apart from the Absolute, but they are certainly real in the Absolute. The Absolute cannot possibly have any content without them. It would be reduced to a nullity. Further, the Absolute is not given in any form of intuition as the differences are given. It is conceived as a principle of explanation or as a principle of unity for the experienced differences. How can we ignore the differences or drop them as of no value? It is the actual differences that set us the problem of unity. This unity then is real only in so far as it accommodates the differences or explains them. We have no direct acquaintance with the unity. It may therefore be differently conceived. But its claim to truth can only rest upon its adequacy to explain the known differences. This is the only test of the truth of a concept which we ourselves are required to formulate for the purposes of explanation.

The limitations of a speculative philosophy in the above sense are evident. If we have no direct

acquaintance with the ultimate principle of unity of all things, we can only fall back upon the different forms of unity with which we are already familiar. If we do not *know* the Absolute, we cannot also make a fresh new conception of it. After all our faculty of conceiving is not free. It can only follow the forms of our present experience. Speculation about the Absolute can thus only be a formal conceptual matter based upon some pattern or patterns of our present experience. Can we under the circumstances succeed in our venture of achieving a complete explanation? It appears to us that it is wrong in principle to set up a part of our experience as a pattern for the whole. Thought is quite at home in analysing each distinct part or aspect of experience, and suggesting a partial principle of unity and so of explanation. But thought can never do justice to the whole. The only thing that can do this is a higher form of experience which *sees* the unity and *sees* the differences as resolved or as cancelled in the unity. This is the only way that the problem can be solved. For the differences cannot be real if the unity is real; but the unity can be real, and must be real, even when the differences *appear* to be real.

We shall consider here three different views about the Absolute in European philosophy. These views

are naturally idealistic. The Absolute must be spiritual in some sense. It cannot be unintelligent like matter. What is unintelligent cannot grasp differences and cannot therefore explain them. Some form of experience seems essential to the Absolute. For experience is nothing if it is not inclusive of differences. It has thus a concreteness about it, which is absent from the idea of mere matter. Mere matter is mere vacuity. It is an abstraction. It is no doubt spoken of as being real in itself and as having relations. But it does not *know* itself, and cannot therefore be said to be *real to itself*. As to relations, unless there is feeling or experience somewhere, the relations cannot be realised. There is a real relation only when there is affection or feeling or prehension. If we eliminate experience from the whole of reality, nothing would be itself, nothing would be what it is. The Absolute must be experience. But what form of experience? Different views may be held in this connection: (1) The Absolute may be conceived as thought. (2) It may be conceived as a certain experience above thought, more or less akin to feeling. (3) It may be conceived as Person.

I. Let us suppose that the ultimate form of experience which will include all the manifold and explain it is knowledge. All knowledge is thought-

knowledge. It necessarily refers to the object which is naturally differentiated in itself and forms an element of a manifold. It is arguable that this manifold is not self-existent. It is constituted by thought. The very "otherness" of the object or the objectivity of the object is not original to-it. It is as the object is known or thought that it is any object at all. Thought then is *the principle* that explains the being or the possibility of the manifold. The only question that is left over is, what thought or what concept will be adequate to the whole of reality? If thought is the principle of synthesis, what thought will represent the synthesis of all reality? Evidently, it cannot be a thought that is partial, or a thought that is appropriate only to certain of the known facts of experience. It must be absolute thought or thought in its highest and most inclusive meaning. To decide this question, it is argued, we need not go to experience itself. For one thing, we have no absolute experience; for another, any contents of experience are constituted by thought. The question can only be decided by the analysis of thought itself. There is a logic inherent in thought. By unravelling this logic, we can see the adequacy and the inadequacy of specific concepts. The principle of progress from the lower to the higher concepts is

the principle of negation. The thesis leads on to its anti-thesis, and so on to a higher synthesis. In this way, we reach the most adequate, the most concrete, the most stable and the most comprehensive of all the concepts. It epitomises for us the Absolute. It is the highest principle of explanation. It is the Absolute Idea. The function of philosophy is to exhibit the whole logical process leading to it. When this task is finished, there is nothing left for pure philosophy to do. Pure philosophy must be equated with transcendental logic. Any further philosophical effort must take the form of showing the applications of this logic to experience in the widest sense.

The first question that arises here is, can thought account for the objective world? If thought is constitutive of the object, if the object has no being independent of thought, then indeed is the world in a way accounted for. But then also knowledge becomes meaningless. What is known is not reality or something that can be said to exist in itself. It is not fundamentally distinct from what is merely imagined. If there is any distinction,—for the known object has the appearance of reality unlike an object which is merely imagined,—then thought is a faculty of illusion-making. Can this thought be the ultimate cosmic principle? If it is, then

illusion-making is in the nature or the make-up of things. There can be no such thing as objective reality; and the whole purpose of knowledge will be frustrated.

Shall we say that thought itself is the real? But there is a limitation upon its reality. Thought is not in any sense a kind of "being in itself". Thought is nothing if it is not a certain function or an activity. This function consists in the reference to the "other" or the object. Thought is thought only as it refers to the object. Kant was thus obliged to admit an ultimate logical unity, the transcendental unity of apperception. The categories were modes of functioning of this unity. We simply go further and say that this unity is not logical, but ontological. It has real being, unlike thought. It precedes all thought, and also survives it. It is the unbroken and the transcendental principle of intelligence in all knowledge.

We started by taking thought as the principle of knowledge and therefore as the highest principle of explanation of the manifold. We have ended by showing that knowledge is not possible, and that the manifold is an unreal and an illusory manifold. Are we then to conclude that there is no real being anywhere, and that knowledge as such is impossible? This conclusion however would not be justified. We

cannot deny the possibility of *all* knowledge. It is because we have apparent knowledge that we have any meaning for the concept "knowledge". When we argue for the impossibility of all knowledge, we have still this meaning in view. Thus, there are certainly cases of knowledge. All that we mean when we say that they are cases of "apparent" knowledge is that the reality known therein is known erroneously or with false attributes. Apparent knowledge then entails the possibility of real knowledge. In fact, apparent knowledge cannot be realised as "apparent" unless it is already transcended and the possibility of real knowledge is indicated. If then being is driven out from the phenomenal world or the thought-world, it must still have some other resting place. If there is a difference between imagination and "knowledge through thought", it is just this: while the former does not set us a problem of knowledge and does not indicate a self-existing reality which may be known, the latter necessarily does so. We contend that the noumenal reality is not a transcendent object, which would be a self-contradiction. It is the true subject. That is the only ultimate ground of the appearance of things. It is the reality in them. The Self alone is known when anything is known. The "outwardness" or the "externality" of the object, together

with all that this externality entails, namely the attributes of the thing, is a mere construction of thought. It is a false attribution to the reality, which is the Self.

Ultimate reality is not known through thought. It is self-known or self-luminous. It knows everything that is ever known. How can there be anything to know it? This reality is the only true spirit, not thought. Thought is a mental function only. The self is aware of it. The self thinks; but the self is not thought. Thought, like every other mental event, disappears in the state of deep sleep; and with it goes, the world constituted by it. The self however never disappears. It illumines the absence no less than the presence of thought. It alone is the light which cannot be covered or concealed. It lights up the covering itself. It is the true ontological principle, not thought.

Let us however suppose that thought is the only true spirit. It is the Absolute. In that case, how shall we conceive the relation of the individual to it? Evidently, thought is here taken to be something quite impersonal. Its life is not confined to any individual. It is a cosmic principle, something like universal consciousness, accounting for all objective being. What is the individual? He would be something less than this universal consciousness.

He would be only a particular centre of the activity of thought. The individual is conditioned by a body. To him therefore the world is sensibly given. It is not exactly constituted by his thought. He is not in the same happy position as the universal spirit. All that we can say is that he partakes of the latter. For he is an embodiment of thought or reason which is the only principle of universality.

This deification of thought appears to us to be quite unwarranted. The only thought that we know is personal thought. It is yours or mine. There is no entity called thought as such. That is an abstraction. The only concrete fact is "I think." This "I" may think. But it may also not think. The person is greater than his thought. He naturally transcends it. To set up thought as the very essence of the person is to set up an abstraction in the place of the concrete. The idealists who regard thought as the ultimate reality and explain the individual as a certain embodiment of that reality are committing what has been called the fallacy of "misplaced concretion". Your thought and my thought may follow the same pattern. But it would be wrong to suppose that this common pattern indicates anything more than that different individuals are similarly constituted in the make-up of their minds.

A variation of the above view may be suggested. It may be said that there is a process of abstraction in thought, and also a process of concretion in it. Thought is abstract when it generalises as in science. All scientific laws are abstractions made by thought by ignoring the particular or the individual. But in philosophy, this process has got to be reversed. To grasp reality as it is, we must not abstract; we must supplement. The finite or the limited is an abstraction. It has meaning only in the Whole. This Whole alone is real or self-subsistent. It is the true Individual or the Absolute.

Ultimate Reality is not a simple and undifferentiated unity. That is nowhere to be found. Everything is related to everything else. It has, as it is said, jagged ends, involving it in relationship to the whole of reality. Ultimate Reality is a system of all things in which each individual thing has its proper function and place. Accordingly, to understand fully even the most insignificant of all things, we must know the whole of reality. To know the part we must know the whole.

The individual as a finite centre of experience has no ultimate reality. His life has a necessary relation to the life of other individuals in a society. He lives and perishes. But while he perishes, the social structure and the social values which he has helped

to create do not perish with him. They have a life and a growth beyond him. They have, unlike the individual, a kind of immortality. The individual has no reality in himself and apart from this greater whole. There is nothing that is exactly *private* to him. In so far as he is taken as an exclusive entity, as the "I" that is distinct from every other "I", he is an abstraction. There is no content and no uniqueness about this "I". It is merely the repetition of every other "I". The uniqueness of organisation of the content is a truer individual. But even this has to be transcended. For ultimately, there is nothing unique and individual except the Absolute.

It appears to us that the notion of the Whole which is here suggested is quite spurious. The Whole may be self-complete, and the Whole may be the only thing that is ultimately real. But what is the nature of the Whole? We have already seen that it cannot be an objective whole. An objective whole is by its very nature incomplete. And yet the only whole that we can reach through the supplementations of thought must be an objective whole. Thought is most at home with objects. It can never quite transcend the object. We may go on supplementing indefinitely, and yet the process will never be completed. It is impossible to exhaust

all the relations which an object might have, and to reach a concrete whole through thought. The Absolute cannot be a system of things. The notion of "system" is an external one. A system is necessarily extensive. It is also necessarily partial, realising a certain kind of unity. We speak of a mathematical system, a mechanical system, an aesthetic system, a moral system, etc. In so far as the system is extensive, it must either be limited in extent, or it must be incomplete. In so far as it is partial, it must ignore certain aspects of the being of things and take note only of those aspects which realise the idea underlying the system. If *all* aspects of being could be *taken together*, they would lose the character of aspects. Being would be transparent and without any aspects. There would be no external relations within being, and no system. The very notion of an "ontological system" is illogical. We contend that the Absolute is necessarily an indivisible and transparent unity. Otherwise, it will lack both completeness and integrality, both wholeness and unity.

Thought by itself is not a true guide to the Absolute. Thought begins with abstractions and ends in abstractions. It makes distinctions *ad-infinitum;* and having made them, it cannot quite transcend them. Having once "broken up", it

cannot reintegrate. The activity of thought towards concretion is the synthetic activity. But all synthesis presupposes analysis. And when the synthesis is achieved, thought cannot stay in it. The synthesis proves to be only partial. A further synthesis is needed, and so on without end. There is no such thing as the final synthesis of thought. For thought is essentially partial. It brings together, unites and synthesises only through analysis. The concrete real is ever beyond its grasp. This is due to the starting point. The starting point of thought is the finite. It is the beginning, and it is also the end. The life of thought is entirely bound up with the finites of experience.

The result is that thought is never adequate to the Absolute. It can at best provide us with an empty concept. This concept remains on one side, and the actual world with all its differences remains on the other. These differences are not explained. All that is offered in the way of explanation is a certain notion of unity on the analogy of the unities which we know. But there is a difference of kind between those finite unities and the ultimate unity. Unless the latter is directly intuited, we fail to see how the differences can be accommodated in it or explained through it. The differences are quite palpable and real to us. But the unity is not. It

is an empty idea, which is merely entertained in thought. It does not enable us to know the exact nature of those relations which are supposed to transform the manifold of our experience into an integrated whole or the Absolute. This is not the case if we conceive the Absolute as the Self. For the Self is not an idea merely. The Self is nothing if it is not a matter of direct and immediate intuition. It is more of this than the sense-objects. The latter are, in the best of circumstances, mediated. The Self alone may be said to be directly known. And then if we admit that the manifold is in a certain relation to the Self, and that this relation can be *seen to be* one of illusory identity, the problem of explanation does not remain on our hands. Look at this picture, and at that. In the one picture, the mainfold alone is real, and the unity is merely an idea at best. In the other picture, the unity alone is real, and the manifold is seen to be resolved into it, being cancelled or sublated. The Absolute as a mere concept can explain nothing. The true explanation in the realm of philosophy must be the *seeing* of the truth or the direct knowledge of the ground of all things. No other explanation, merely conceptual in character, is possible.

Again, it would be wrong to suppose that the individual is subordinate to a whole that is greater

than it. There is no experience, and no spiritual reality, outside the person. Art, literature and the institutions of a society have a kind of permanence and may in a sense be said to be greater than any particular individual that has contributed towards them. But this is only an external view of things. The value of these achievements of human genius lies in their representing certain personal experiences. This experience alone is the seat of value. The records of these experiences, and the media of preservation and of communication, have only a secondary value. If the individuals were abolished, there would be no experience left anywhere and no value. Nothing is valuable unless the person has made it so. In fact, he embodies in his own being the highest of all values, the ultimate value. Everything is valuable because of him. It derives value from him. He is superior to any impersonal structure or purely objective value. How can he be subordinated to the latter?

It has been argued that the individual taken in the sense of a pure "I" is empty of all content and does not represent any reality. This appears to us to be far from being true. Normally speaking, the experience of each individual is quite private to him. My experience is mine, and your experience is yours. We cannot exactly communicate our own experience

to others. Indeed, this has been denied. But even if we could communicate our own experience as it is to others, there would be certain limits set to it. My experience would still be mine, and the other fellow's experience his. I cannot claim his experience to be *the same thing as* my experience. Nor can he make that claim. The difference of the body determining the difference of the individual is in this sense an absolute barrier. We can infer another man's thoughts and feelings more or less correctly from his behaviour. But we cannot *peep* into his mind. Notwithstanding this difference, we may admit that different individuals in a society partake of the same kind of mental life, that they are animated by the same kind of thoughts, feelings and sentiments, and that they are inspired by the same ideals. But this certainly does not mean any kind of over-individual reality.

Let us take, as an instance, the life of reason. The laws of reason which operate in me are also the laws which operate in you. But reason does not operate outside the individual. Indeed, our use of reason and our conscious recognition of it may vary. But all the laws of reason are immanent wherever reason operates; and I am quite entitled to infer that you as a rational being must reason exactly in the same way as I do. This so-called universal

reason has no *life of its own.* It is realised only in the life of each individual person. It is less than the person. For the person is not merely his reason. His reason is an aspect of his individuated and temporal life. He uses reason for certain purposes. It is a means to an end. He knows its limitations. He goes beyond it where he thinks fit. He substitutes other forms of experience for it as in religion, and subordinates thought to feeling or certain higher forms of intuition. Man is not all reason. So also he is not any other "content" which he shares with his fellow beings. If there is anything universal in him, it is the pure spirit. But this is not any "content".

We suggest that man is not exactly isolated in his intuition of "I". It is just the opposite. The intuition of "I" is a unifying intuition. I distinguish in myself several grades of subjectivity. All those grades are certain forms of the object. The self as identified with any of these forms is a limited self or an object-self. He is not exactly "I", but "this-I". He speaks of himself as "I am this". But in the highest grade of subjectivity or the pure subject, no limitation is possible; and no distinction can be made between the "I" in you and the "I" in me. What divides you and me are the various object-bodies. I, as united with these bodies, am different

from you. But when this correction has been made, the real subject or the pure spirit which alone knows in me and knows in you, has no differences whatsoever in it. The ultimate Self of each one of us is the same.

Reason has modifications. There is more of it in you and less of it in me. We cannot say what is ultimate reason. All reason operates under certain conditions and restrictions. Apart from these, it has no life. But there can be no modification of the universal spirit. All its modifications are illusory, due to its identification with certain forms of the object. It is in this way that we take on the character of the object, and begin to think of ourselves as deficient in certain things or as proficient in others.

II. It may now be said that thought is not the ultimate principle of reality. This is an experience which is above thought. It is to be conceived on the analogy of feeling. It is inclusive of all differences. What distinguishes feeling is the unity of the subject and the object. The two do not fall apart. They constitute a concrete whole. Differences are no doubt present in it; but they do not require to be externally related or related through thought. This then is the only concrete reality. Absolute Experience is the highest form of feeling

experience that becomes possible only after we have transcended thought. It is all-inclusive, free from self-contradiction, and not open to the analysis and the dissection of thought.

It appears to us that this is once again an abstraction. We cannot eliminate the person, and retain any kind of experience, feeling or otherwise. It has been suggested that *sentience* is the most general form of experience; and the Absolute must be at least this. But sentience cannot float in the air. It cannot be unsupported and unappropriated. Sentience may be a feeling-relation to things. But it, no less than any other experience, implies the person. A feeling is after all only one aspect of a person's experience. It represents a specific kind of subject-object relation in contra-distinction to the knowledge-relation or the will-relation. If feeling is made absolute, it ceases to be feeling in any sense.

It may be said that the analogy of Absolute Experience to feeling is not complete in all respects. What is merly contended is that it is an all-inclusive experience, that the problems of thought are eliminated in it, and that it is the highest form of experience. It is certainly not a partial experience like feeling. What it shares in common with feeling is the intimate way in which differences are related or made one.

Now it appears to us that "experience" is not the right term to employ to indicate the nature of the ultimate reality. Experience must have a certain content. It must refer to an object. And any kind of relation of the subject with the object will naturally be partial in character. It cannot include other forms of relationship. If it is the feeling-form of relation, it cannot include the thought-relation and the will-relation. Experience has also a reference to the person who experiences. The personal character indicated by the expression "my experience" is essential to all experience. And then experience is necessarily temporal. It constitutes a certain series. If any experience is static or timeless, it ceases to be experience. We can no longer speak of it as experience *of* anything in particular. It will be vacuous. Experience and its object will not fall apart and will not be distinguishable in any sense. It is only as the objects change, and the subject experiencing remains unchanged, that we can make any distinction between experience and its objects. Without this distinction, experience will not emerge as any kind of reality of which we may speak. All experience is defined by the object. It is *that* experience. But then it is already transcended. There is the subject that speaks of it. This subject is not temporal. It is truly immutable.

it is the higher reality, not experience. It is inclusive of all experience. But it is not itself included in anything higher.

Let us however suppose that ultimate reality is experience, and that this experience is ineffable and unspeakable. But then can we say that it includes a manifold? All forms of including a manifold with which we are familiar are finite forms. We cannot say that it is feeling. Feeling is not feeling if it cannot be objectified and distinguished from other forms of experience. It is after all a finite mode of experience. All that we can say about absolute experience is that it is absolute. But then it is quite unattainable from our present finite position, and we can make no intelligible conception of it. An experience which is not open to the analysis of thought is not describable as a unity of differences. And when we so describe it, we have surreptitiously introduced thought and all the distinctions of thought. *Any kind* of manifold once admitted is a thought-manifold and involves some relations of thought. A manifold at any level or in any form cannot be realised without thought. What transcends thought absolutely, is absolutely indescribable and falls outside the pale of philosophy in a way. To say then that an experience is above thought and to say that its content is none other than the mani-

fold of ordinary experience, is a self-contradiction. The highest or the ineffable experience must abolish all distinctions of thought; or in the alternative, all the problems of thought will be relevant once again.

In contra-distinction to this way of thinking, we have proposed a view of ultimate reality not as experience, but as being. This being indeed transcends thought. But it is not unrelated to intuition. It is pure contentless intuition, which is the ground of all other intuitions. Thought cannot exactly reach it. But it can recognise it as its own ground and as the ultimate reality. For thought is after all subservient to intuition, and it takes note of everything that is a matter of intuition in any form or at any level. As to explaining the manifold of ordinary experience, we have seen that this cannot be done by retaining the manifold as real. There is no side-tracking the question,— is the unity ultimate or the manifold? For both cannot be real. The One cannot be Many, and *vice versa*. The unity can only be said to explain the many, when it is the ground of the many, or when the many cannot be realised as many without it. There must no doubt be a relation between the two. But it must not be a logical relation. For the many cannot be *deduced* logically from the one. It must be the a-logical relation of false identity, or the identity of

the illusory appearance with its ground. If the many are real and the unity also is real, the two will remain logically unconnected, and there can be no question of the former being explained through the latter. The needs of explanation demand a real ultimate unity, and further a false or illusory connection. Our view provides this. The Absolute is the non-dual Self, and everything else beside it appears through the relation of false identity with it. We have merely to extend the notion of "mine" to include all possible objects.

III. The third and the last view which we want to consider here is that ultimate reality cannot be other than the person. The person appears to be the most concrete form of being. All spiritual activity is dependent upon him. There is nothing higher than the person, and ultimate reality is the true or the highest person.

This may be so. But our idea of a person is naturally derived from our idea of a human being. We know a person in ourselves and in other beings like ourselves. The Absolute is accordingly conceived as an exalted man. This however would not be true. A person in the above sense cannot but be endowed with some limitation or other. He will have certain thoughts and feelings, certain desires, certain motives of action, etc. Such an entity,

however we may seek to extend his powers, will only be *a person* among others, not the Absolute. In order that he should be the Absolute, all the limitations of individuality must be transcended. But then is there any need to go out of ourselves in search of this person? The Absolute Person cannot possibly exclude myself. If it did, it would be external to me and so finite. It could not possibly absorb me or include me. No person can do that in respect of another person.

The self is the highest form of reality, and this reality is directly intuited in what I call "myself". The self in me, taken merely as self, is quite unlimited. It is only when it is identified with some form of the not-self that it becomes finite or limited. In itself, it is *pure intelligence*, and *being* without any qualification. It is the same self in you and in me. For what divides you and me is the body. And not only the physical body. Any form of the object with which the self is erroneously identified is a body of that self. The self as such is the principle of unity. There cannot be two selfs merely as selfs. The self is nothing if it is not alone, free from all limitation, and infinite. This is the only true person. And this person is in me and in every other possible person, if we admit several persons.

The notion of God as commonly held cannot be equated with the Absolute. God is only an exalted man. He is spoken of as "seeing" or as "thinking". He "wishes" to be many. He says, "Let me create." He is conceived as a potentate, and we are to submit to him as our Lord. But we cannot help thinking of his limitations in wisdom, or in power, or in holiness. For his creation is full of deficiencies everywhere. It entails infinite and unnecessary suffering. And then why should he want to be many at all, why should he want to create? A perfect being has no reason to think about his own state, or to seek to change it in any way. Imperfection would appear to be the only cause of creation. God, conceived in the above way, is not the Absolute.

The true God is within us. It is the Self that is the ground of the appearance of all things. There is no real creation anywhere. There is only illusory appearance. This Self is by its very nature blissful. Whatever we do or do not do, we are moving and living in this bliss, which is inalienable from our being. It is only ignorance of our true Self which divides us from this bliss.

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